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1873.

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TO

Professor Lieber

New York

By J. Smith Homans,

SECRETARY OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NEW YORK.

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THE

CHARTER AND BY-LAWS,

WITH

A HISTORY

OF

The Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York.

INSTITUTED APRIL 5, 1768; INCORPORATED MARCH 13, 1770;
RE-INCORPORATED APRIL 13, 1784.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE CHAMBER.
1855

HF295
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NEW-YORK:
JOHN M. ELLIOTT, PRINTER,
No. 12 Old Slip.

NOTE.

THE original Charter of the Chamber of Commerce, written on parchment, and contained in a mahogany case, which was enclosed in a tin box, is believed to have been preserved at the time of the destruction of the Merchants' Exchange by fire, in December, 1835. Since that time, although diligent inquiry has been made, no trace has been found of it. This notice is made, in the hope that the members of the Chamber will assist in an effort to recover a record of such antiquity and interest. Information on the subject is requested by the Secretary.

Officers of the Chamber.

1855.

P. PERIT, PRESIDENT.
GEORGE CURTIS, 1st VICE PRESIDENT.
ROYAL PHELPS, 2d VICE PRESIDENT.
JOHN J. PALMER, TREASURER.
EDW'D C. BOGERT, SECRETARY.

Committee of Arbitration.

JOSHUA L. POPE, CHAIRMAN.

Committee on Mercantile Library.

HENRY W. HICKS,
CHAS. AUG. DAVIS,
CHAS. H. MARSHALL,
HENRY K. BOGERT,
PHILO L. MILLS.

Auditors of Accounts.

STEWART BROWN,
GEORGE CURTIS.

Commissioners of Pilots.

ROBERT L. TAYLOR,
CHARLES H. MARSHALL,
E. E. MORGAN.

MEMBERS

OF

The New-York Chamber of Commerce.

Adams, John T.
Allen, Gilbert
Alsop, Joseph W.
Anderson, Elbert T.
Aspinwall, John L.
Aspinwall, William H.
Astor, William B.
Aymar, Benjamin

Babcock, Samuel D.
Baker, John O.
Baldwin, Simeon
Barnewall, William
Barrow, Henry H.
Barstow, Caleb
Barstow, Henry W.
Beebe, Charles E.
Beebee, George W.
Bell, George
Bell, Abraham
Bell, James C.
Benjamin, Meigs D.
Benson, Arthur W.
Bierwirth, Leopold
Binns, William
Blossom, Benjamin
Blunt, George W.
Bogert, Henry K.
Bogert, Edward C.
Boorman, James
Boyd, John J.
Brewer, Henry O.
Brower, John H.
Brown, Elias B.
Beals, Samuel J.
Brown, Francis
Brown, John P.
Brown, James
Brown, Stewart
Bucklin, Thomas P.
Burkhalter, Charles
Burlew, Richard

Caldwell, Samuel B.
Coman, Lucien D.
Carlyle, Nathaniel D.
Carow, Charles
Carson, Thomas J.
Cary, William F.
Cary, William H.
Chamberlain, William
Chauncey, Henry
Clapp, Wellington
Clearman, George M.
Coffin, Edmund
Collins, Edward K.
Collins, John
Comstock, Samuel W.
Connolly, Charles M.
Cooper, William B.
Corning, Hanson H.
Cotheal, David
Cottenet, Francis
Cozzens, Abraham M.
Curtis, George
Cuthbertson, William D.

Davis, Charles A.
Dabney, Charles H.
De Forest, William W.
Dehon, Theodore
Delafield, Henry
Delano, Franklin H.
Delano, Frederick A.
Demarest, James
Depeyster, James F.
Derham, Henry C.
Devlin, John E.
Dillon, Robert
Dimon, Frederick
Dodge, William E.
Draper, Simeon
Duer, Denning
Duncan, William B.
Dunham, Thomas
Durand, Calvin
Durbrow, John B.

Eagle, Horatio
Earle, John H.
Easton, Charles
Elliott, George T.
Elwell, James W.
Emmet, William J.
Everett, Silas K.

Faile, Edward G.
Faile, Thomas H.
Fearing, Charles N.
Fearing, Daniel B.
Ferguson, John
Field, Benjamin H.
Field, Hickson W.
William R. Fosdick,
Foster, Andrew
Foulke, Louis P.
Fowler, Joseph
Freeman, Melancthon M.
Frost, Charles L.
Frost, William T.
Frothingham, Abraham R.
French, F. M.

Gaillard, Joseph Jr.
Gebhard, Frederick C.
Glidden, Samuel G.
Goodhue, Robert C.
Gordon, Oliver H.
Gourlie, John H.
Grant, Alexander H.
Graves, E. Boonen
Griffith, Walter S.
Grinnell, Cornelius
Grinnell, Henry
Grinnell, Moses H.
Griswold, John
Gross, John L.

Habicht, C. Edward
Hadden, David
Harbeck, William H.
Havemeyer, William F.
Hicks, Henry W.
Hicks, John H.
Hincken, Edward
Hoadley, David
Hoffman, Lindley M.
Hoge, William
Holt, Horatio N.
Hotaling, Samuel
Hubbard, Nathaniel T.
Humphrey, Solon
Hunt, Freeman
Hurd, John R.

Irvin, Richard

Johnson, Stephen
Jones, John D.
Jones, Walter R.

Kelly, Robert
Kendall, Isaac
Kent, Henry A.
Kernochan, Joseph
King, Archibald G.
King, James G.
Kingsland, Ambrose C.
Kingsland, Daniel C.
Knapp, Shepherd
Kneeland, Charles

Lamar, Gazaway B.
Lambert, Edward A.
Lambert, William G.
Lamson, Charles
Lane, David
Lane, George W.
Lane, Robert L.
Lathers, Richard
Lathrop, Francis S.
Lawrence, Alexander M.
Lawrence, Cornelius W.
Leary, Arthur
Lee, James
Lefferts, Marshall
Lenox, James
Leupp, Charles M.
Little, Jacob
Livingston, Mortimer
Livingston, Schuyler
Low, Abiel A.
Ludlam, Henry

Macy, Charles A.
Macy, Francis H.
Macy, John H.
Macy, William H.
Maitland, Robert L.
Maitland, William C.
Mali, Henry W. T.
Marsh, Samuel
Marshall, Charles H.
Maury, Mathew
McBride, George Jr.
McCready, Nathaniel L.
Merle, Gillaume
Merritt, Jacob T.
Meyer, Lewis H.
Milliken, David
Mills, Drake
Mills, Philo L.
Mills, Philo L. Jr.
Minturn, Robert B.
Mitchill, Samuel L.
Moore, William
Morgan, Edwin D.
Morgan, Elisha E.
Morgan, George D.
Mott, William F. Jr.
Mumford, Benjamin A.
Murdock, Uriel A.
Murray, James B.
Meyers, John K.

Nash, Lora
Neilson, Anthony B.
Neilson, John
Nelson, John G.
Nelson, William
Newbold, Clayton
Norrie, Adam

Oelricks, Edwin A.
Ogden, David
Ogden, James Depeyster
Olyphant, David
Osgood, Nathaniel H.
Otis, James W.

Palmer, John J.
Palmer, Nathaniel B.
Park, Charles F.
Park, Rufus
Pearson, Isaac G.
Peck, William M.
Penfold, Edmund
Pepoon, Marshall
Perit, Pelatiah
Petrie, James S.
Phelps, Anson G.
Phelps, Royal
Phillips, James W.
Phœnix, James P.
Phœnix, John D.
Pillot, Andrew P.
Pond, Loyal S.
Pope, Joshua L.
Porter, Asa S.
Poultney, Benjamin

Raberg, Charles H.
Redmond, William
Reed, Isaac H.
Richardson, Edward
Robbins, George S.
Robert, Christopher R.
Roome, Charles H.
Roosevelt, Cornelius V. S.
Rogers, Charles H.
Russell, Charles H.

Sale, William A. Jr.
Sage, Francis P.
Sampson, Joseph
Sanderson, Edward F.
Sayre, David L.
Sherman, Benjamin B.
Sherman, Watts
Simes, John D.
Slate, Oliver Jr.
Sloan, Samuel
Smith, Isaac H.
Smith, J. Rufus
Smith, James
Smythe, Henry A.
Southmayd, Horace
Soutter, James T.
Spofford, Paul
Spofford, Paul N.
Stanton, Thomas P.
Stebbins, Henry G.
Stephenson, George S.
Stevens, Byam K.
Stevens, John A.
Stone, William W.

Story, Rufus
Strachan, Patrick
Stratton, Robert M.
Stucken, Edward
Sturges, Jonathan
Sturges, William E.
Sturgis, Russell

Suarez, Leonardo S.
Suffern, Thomas
Süs, A. William
Sutton, Cornelius K.
Sutton, Effingham B.
Suydam, Henry

Talbot, George A.
Talcott, Frederick L.
Tappan, John S.
Taylor, Robert L.
Terry, John T.
Thomæ, George F.
Thomas, John
Thompson, Jonathan
Thompson, Samuel
Thorne, Jonathan

Thurston, Frederick G.
Tileston, Thomas
Todd, William J.
Townsend, Isaac
Trask, Charles H.
Tredwell, George
Trimble, George T.
Trimble, Merritt
Trundy, Richard W.
Tucker, R. Sands

Underwood, John A.

Vietor, Theodore

Vose, Francis

Wakeman, Burr
Waldron, George B.
Wall, Charles
Wall, William
Walter, Ellwood
Ward, Augustus H.
Warren, George
Webb, William H.
Westervelt, Jacob A.
Weston, Richard W.
Wetmore, Prosper M.
Wetmore, William S.
Wheeler, Ezra
Wheeler, William A.
White, Campbell P.
Whitlock, Augustus
Whitlock, Benjamin M.
Whitney, Stephen
Williams, John S.
Wilson, James B.
Wilson, William S.
Winslow, Isaac
Winslow, Thomas S.
Winthrop, Benjamin R.
Withers, Reuben

Young, Edmund M.

The above embraces all the members of the Chamber up to this present time.

New-York, Dec. 11, 1855.

OFFICERS

OF THE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

FROM ITS ORGANIZATION,

1768.

PRESIDENTS.

ELECTED.		RETIRED.
1768	John Cruger,	1770
1770	Hugh Wallace,	1771
1771	Elias Desbrosses,	1774
1774	William Walton,	1775
1775	Isaac Low,	1784
1784	John Alsop,	1785
1785	John Broome,	1794
1794	Comfort Sands,	1798
1798	John Murray,	1806
1806	Cornelius Ray,	1819
1819	William Bayard,	1827
1827	Robert Lenox,	1840
1840	Isaac Carow,	1842
1842	James De Peyster Ogden,	1845
1845	James G. King,	1847
1847	Moses H. Grinnell,	1848
1848	James G. King,	1849
1849	Moses H. Grinnell,	1852
1852	Elias Hicks, (died,)	1853
1853	P. Perit,	

VICE PRESIDENTS.

1768	Hugh Wallace,	1770
1770	Elias Desbrosses,	1771
1770	Henry White,	1773
1771	Theophylact Bache,	1774
1772	William Walton,	1774

ELECTED.		RETIRED.
1773	Isaac Low,	1775
1774	John Alsop,	1779
1775	William McAdam,	1780
1779	Thomas Buchannan,	1783
1779	Hugh Wallace,	1781
1781	Jacob Walton,	1783
1783	William Walton,	1784
1783	Gerard Walton,	1785
1784	Isaac Sears,	1785
1785	William Constable,	1788
1785	Pascal N. Smith,	1788
1788	Theophylact Bache,	1792
1788	John Murray,	1798
1792	Gerard Walton,	1793
1793	Comfort Sands,	1794
1794	John Blagge,	1797
1797	John B. Coles,	1817
1798	George Barnewall,	1800
1800	Archibald Gracie,	1825
1817	William Bayard,	1819
1819	Robert Lenox,	1827
1825	William W. Woolsey,	1839
1827	Isaac Carrow,	1840
1839	James Boorman,	1841
1840	James De Peyster Ogden,	1842
1841	James G. King,	1845
1842	Henry K. Bogert,	1846
1845	Stewart Brown,	1847
1846	David S. Kennedy,	1847
1847	Moses H. Grinnell,	1847
1847	William H. Macy,	1849
1848	Moses H. Grinnell,	1849
1849	James De Peyster Ogden,	1851
1849	Prosper M. Wetmore,	1850
1850	Charles H. Russell,	1852
1851	Elias Hicks,	1852
1852	Caleb Barstow,	1855
1852	Samuel L. Mitchell,	1854
1854	George Curtis,	
1855	Royal Phelps,	

ELECTED. RETIRED.

TREASURERS.

1768	Elias Desbrosses,	1770
1770	Theophylact Bache,	1771
1771	William Walton,	1772
1772	Isaac Low,	1773
1773	John Alsop,	1774
1774	William McAdam,	1775
1875	Charles McEvers,	1780
1780	Robert Ross Waddle,	1784
1784	John Broome,	1785
1785	Joshua Sands,	1789
1789	Cornelius Ray,	1806
1806	Henry J. Wyckoff,	1840
1840	John J. Palmer,	

SECRETARIES.

1768	Anthony Van Dam,	1784
1784	John Blagge,	1785
1785	Adam Gilchrist, Jr.,	1786
1786	William Shotwell,	1787
1787	William Laight,	1796
1796	William W. Woolsey,	1801
1801	Jonathan H. Lawrence,	1803
1803	John Ferrers,	
1817	John Pintard,	1827
1827	John A. Stevens,	1832
1832	John R. Hurd,	1834
1834	Jacob Harvey,	1838
1838	E. A. Boonen Graves,	1841
1841	John D. Van Beuren,	1843
1843	John L. H. McCrackan,	1843
1843	Prosper M. Wetmore,	1849
1849	Matthew Maury,	1853
1853	Edward C. Bogert,	

CHARTER

OF

The New-York Chamber of Commerce.

GEORGE THE THIRD, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and so forth—To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS, a great number of merchants in our city of New York, in America, have, by voluntary agreement, associated themselves for the laudable purposes of promoting the trade and commerce of our said province; and whereas, John Cruger, Esq., the present President of the said Society, by his humble petition presented in behalf of the said Society, to our trusty and well-beloved Cadwallader Colden, Esq., our Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief of our said province of New York, and the territories depending thereon in America, and read in our Council for our said Province, on the twenty-eighth day of February last past, hath represented to our said Lieutenant Governor, that the said Society (sensible that numberless inestimable benefits have accrued to mankind from commerce; that they are, in proportion to their greater or lesser application to it, more or less opulent and potent in all countries; and that the enlargement of trade will vastly increase the value of real estates, as well as the general opulence of our said colony) have associated together for some time past, in order to carry into execution among themselves, and by their example to promote in others, such measures as were beneficial to

Recites that the Chamber had petitioned Lieutenant Gov. Colden,

the 28th February,

those salutary purposes; and that the said Society having, with great pleasure and satisfaction, experienced the good effects which the few regulations already adopted, had produced, were very desirous of rendering them more extensively useful and permanent, and more adequate to the purposes of so benevolent an institution; and therefore the petitioner, in behalf of the said Society, most humbly prayed our said Lieutenant Governor to incorporate them a body politic, and to invest them with such powers and authorities as might be thought most conducive to answer and promote the commercial and consequently the landed interest of our said growing colony; which petition being read as aforesaid, was then and there referred to a Committee of our said Council, and afterwards on the same day, our said Council, in pursuance of the report of the said Committee, did humbly advise and consent, that our said Lieutenant Governor, by our letters patent, should constitute and appoint the petitioner, and the present members of the said Society, a body corporate and politic, by the name of "THE CORPORATION OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, IN AMERICA," agreeable to the prayer of the said petition: Therefore, we being willing to further the laudable designs of our said loving subjects, and to give stability to an institution from whence great advantages may arise, as well to our kingdom of Great Britain as to our said province,

to incorporate them,

by the name of the "Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York."

KNOW YE, That of our special grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we have willed, ordained, given, granted, constituted, and appointed, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, do will, ordain, give, grant, constitute, and appoint, that the present members of the said Society, associated for the purpose aforesaid, that is to say, John Cruger, Elias Desbrosses, James Jauncey, Jacob Walton, Robert Murray, Hugh Wallace, George Folliot, Wm. Walton, John Alsop, Henry White, Philip Livingston, Samuel Verplanck, Theophylact Bache, Thomas White, Miles

Sherbrook, Walter Franklin, Robert Ross Waddell, Acheson Thompson, Lawrence Kortwright, Thomas Randall, William M'Adam, Isaac Low, Anthony Van Dam, Robert Watts, John Harris Cruger, Gerard Walton, Isaac Sears, Jacobus Van Zandt, Charles M'Evers, John Moore, Lewis Pintard, Levinus Clarkson, Nicholas Gouverneur, Richard Yates, Thomas Marston, Peter Hassencliver, Alexander Wallace, Gabriel H. Ludlow, Thomas Buchannan, Wm. Neilson, Sampson Simson, Peter Kettletas, Gerard W. Beekman, Jacob Watson, Richard Sharpe, Peter Remsen, Henry Remsen, junior, William Seton, Edw. Laight, John Reade, Robert Alexander, Thomas W. Moore, Abraham Lynson, Isaac Roosevelt, Nicholas Hoffman, Hamilton Young, Thomas Walton, John Thurman, John Weatherhead, Garrit Rapelye, Gerard Duyckinck, William Stepple, William Imlay, Augustus Van Horne, Henry C. Bogert, George W. Ludlow, Joseph Bull, Leonard Lispenard, Thomas Miller, Jas. Beckman, Samuel Kemble, Alexander M'Donald, and Samuel Bayard, jun., all of our city of New York, in our said province of New York, merchants, and their successors, to be elected by virtue of this our present Charter, shall for ever hereafter be one body corporate and politic in deed, fact and name, by the name and style "The Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the City of New York, in America," and them and their successors by the same name, we do by these presents really and fully make, erect, create, constitute and declare one body politic and corporate in deed, fact, and name for ever; and will, give, grant, and ordain, that they and their successors, the Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, by the same name, shall and may have perpetual succession, and shall and may by the same name, be persons capable in the law to sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, in all courts and elsewhere, in all manner of actions, suits, complaints, pleas, causes, matters, and demands whatsoever, as fully and amply as any other

To have perpetual succession.

To sue and be sued in all manner of actions.

our liege subjects of our said province of New York may or can sue or be sued, implead or be impleaded, defend or be defended, by any lawful ways or means whatsoever; and that they and their successors by the same name, shall be for ever hereafter persons capable and able in the law to purchase, take, receive, hold, and enjoy, to them and their successors, any messuages, tenements, houses, and real estates whatsoever, and all other hereditaments of whatsoever nature, kind and quality they may be, in fee simple, for term of life or lives, or in any other manner howsoever, and also any goods, chattels, or personal estate whatsoever, as well for enabling them the better to carry into execution, encourage and promote by just and lawful ways and means, such measures as will tend to promote and extend just and lawful commerce, as to provide for, aid, and assist, at their discretion, such members of our said corporation as may hereafter be reduced to poverty, and their widows and children: *Prorided always*, the clear yearly value of the said real estate doth not at any time exceed the sum of three thousand pounds sterling, lawful money of our kingdom of Great Britain. And that our said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, by the same name, shall and may have full power and authority to give, grant, sell, lease, demise and dispose of the same real estate and hereditaments whatsoever, for life or lives, or years, or for ever; and all goods, chattels, and personal estates whatsoever, at their will and pleasure, according as they shall judge to be most beneficial and advantageous to the good ends and purposes aforementioned. And that it shall and may be lawful for them and their successors for ever hereafter, to have a common seal, to serve for the causes and business of them and their successors, and the same seal to change, alter, break, and make new from time to time at their pleasure. And also that they and their successors by the same name, shall and may have full power and authority to erect and build out of their common funds or by any other

May be capable in law to purchase and enjoy real estates.

To promote and extend com'erce and assist distressed members

Provided their clear yearly income does not exceed £3,000 sterl. per ann.

Power to lease or dispose of real estate, &c.

And have a common seal, which may be altered.

ways or means, for the use of the Corporation hereby erected, any house, houses, or other buildings, as they shall think necessary and convenient. And for the better carrying into execution the purposes aforesaid, our royal will and pleasure is, and we do hereby give and grant to the Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, that there shall be for ever hereafter belonging to the said Corporation, one President, one or more Vice President or Vice Presidents, one or more Treasurer or Treasurers, and one Secretary; and for the more immediate carrying into execution our royal will and pleasure herein, we do hereby assign, constitute, and appoint the above named John Cruger, Esq., to be the present President; the above named Hugh Wallace to be the present Vice President; the above named Elias Desbrosses to be the present Treasurer, and the above named Anthony Van Dam to be the present Secretary of our said Corporation hereby erected, who shall hold, possess, and enjey their said respective offices until the first Tuesday in May now next ensuing:—and for keeping up the succession in the said offices, our royal will and pleasure is, and we do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, establish, direct, and require, and give and grant to the said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, that on the said first Tuesday in May now next ensuing, [and for the keeping up the succession in the said office, our royal will and pleasure is, and we do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, establish, direct and require, and give and grant to the said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, that on the said first Tuesday in May now next ensuing,] and yearly, and every year for ever thereafter, on the first Tuesday in May in every year, they and their successors shall meet at some convenient place in our said city of New York, to be fixed and ascertained by some of the By-Laws and Regulations of our said Corporation, and

May build any house or houses.

For ever to have one President, one or more Vice Presidents, one or more Treasurers and one Secretary.

Appointment of J. Cruger, Esq., President; Hugh Wallace, Vice President; Elias DesbrossesTreasurer; Anthony Van Dam Secretary.

On the 1st Tuesday in May in every year, to meet and choose officers.

there, by the majority of such of them as shall so meet, shall by ballot, or in such other manner and form as shall be regulated by the By-laws or Regulations of our said Corporation, elect or choose one President, one or more Vice President or Vice Presidents, one or more Treasurer or Treasurers, and one Secretary, to serve in the said offices for the ensuing year, who shall immediately enter upon their respective offices, and hold, exercise, and enjoy the same respectively from the time of such election, for and during the space of one year, and until other fit persons shall be elected and chosen in their respective places, according to the laws and regulations aforesaid. And in case any of the said persons by these presents nominated and appointed to the respective offices aforesaid, or who shall hereafter be elected and chosen thereto respectively, shall die, or on any account be removed from such offices respectively before the time of their respective appointed services shall be expired, or refuse or neglect to act in and execute the office for which he or they shall be so elected and chosen, or is or are herein nominated or appointed, that then, and in any and every such case, it shall and may be lawful for the members of our said body corporate hereby erected, to meet at such time and times, and at such place and places within our said city of New York, and upon such notices and summons as shall for that purpose be established and directed by the By-laws or Regulations of our said body corporate, and there, by the majority of such of them as shall so meet, elect and choose other or others to the said offices respectively, in the place of him or them so dying, removing, neglecting or refusing to act in manner and form, and after the same method to be observed in the annual elections of the like officers respectively, by virtue of these our letters patent, and the said By-laws or regulations of our said Corporation, hereby giving and granting, that such person or persons as shall be so elected and chosen by the majority of such of the said members as shall meet in manner aforesaid, shall have, hold, exercise and enjoy such the office or offices to

And elect one President, one or more Vice Presidents, one or more Treasurers and one Secretary, for one year.

And until other fit persons be chosen.

In case any of the present or future officers shall die or be removed,

others may be elected,

upon notice given,

by a majority of votes,

who shall exercise the offices until the first of May following.

which he or they shall be so elected and chosen, from the time of such election until the first Tuesday in May then next ensuing, and until other or others be legally chosen in his or their place and stead, as fully and amply to all intents and purposes whatsoever, as the person or persons in whose place he or they shall be chosen might or could have done by virtue of these presents. And our will and pleasure is, and we do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, ordain, direct and require, that every President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary to be elected by virtue of these presents, shall, before they act in their respective offices, take an oath or affirmation to be to them administered by the President, or in his absence by one of the Vice Presidents of the preceding year, (who are hereby authorized to administer the same,) for the faithful and due execution of their respective offices during their continuance in the same respectively.—And we do further, for us, our heirs and successors, give and grant to the Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, that besides the annual meeting of our said Corporation herein before directed and appointed to be held on the first Tuesday in May in every year, it shall and may be lawful for them, their heirs and successors, for ever hereafter, for promoting and carrying into execution the laudable intents and designs aforesaid, and for the transacting the business and concerns of our said Corporation, to meet together on the first Tuesday in every month, for ever, at such place or places in our said city of New York as shall for that purpose be established, fixed, ascertained and appointed by the By-laws and Regulations of our said Corporation: and that the members of our said Corporation being so met, or so many of them in number at the least as shall by the By-laws or ordinances of our said Corporation be for that purpose from time to time established, directed, ordained or appointed, shall, together with the President, or any one of the Vice Presidents of our said Corporation for the time being, be a legal meeting of our said Corporation; and they, or the

Officers to take an oath or affirmation before the President or Vice President,

for the faithful discharge of their duty.

The first Tuesday in May in every year.

The President or any one of the Vice Presidents, with such a number of the members as the By-Laws direct, to be a legal meeting to adjourn from day to day,

major part of them so met, shall have full power and authority to adjourn from day to day, or for any other time, as the business of our said Corporation may require, and to do, execute, and perform all and every act and acts, thing and things whatsoever which the said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New-York, in America, are or shall by these our letters patent be authorized to do, act or transact, in as full and ample manner as if all and every of the members of the said Corporation were present. And that at any such legal meeting of the said Corporation, they shall and may in writing, under the common seal, make, frame, constitute, establish, and ordain from time to time, and at all times hereafter, such laws, constitutions, ordinances, regulations, and statutes, for the better government of the officers and members of the said Corporation, for fixing and ascertaining the places of meeting of our said Corporation as aforesaid, and for regulating all other their affairs and business as they, or the major part of them so legally met, shall judge best for the general good of the said Corporation, and profitable for the more effectually promoting the beneficial designs of their institution;—all which laws, constitutions, regulations, ordinances, and statutes so to be made, framed, constituted, established, and ordained as aforesaid, we will, command, and ordain by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, to be from time to time and at all times hereafter, kept, obeyed, and performed in all things as the same ought to be, on the penalties and amercements in the same to be imposed and limited, so as the same laws, constitutions, regulations, and statutes be reasonable in themselves, and not repugnant or contrary to the laws and statutes of that part of our kingdom of Great Britain called England, nor of our said province of New York.—And, for the keeping up and preserving for ever hereafter a succession of members for the said Corporation, our will and pleasure is, and we do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, ordain, and give and grant to the said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city

and transact business,

and be obeyed,

so that they are not repugnant or contrary to the laws of Great Britain and New York.

For the succession of members,

of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, that at any of the stated legal meetings of the said Corporation, to be held on the first Tuesday in every month for ever hereafter, but at no other meeting of our said Corporation, it shall and may be lawful for them and their successors for ever, to elect and choose in such manner and form, and upon such terms and conditions, as shall be directed, ordained, and established for that purpose by any of the said By-laws, statutes, constitutions, or ordinances of the said Corporation, such and so many persons to be members of the said Corporation as they shall think beneficial to the laudable designs of the said Corporation; which persons, and every of them so from time to time elected and chosen, shall by virtue of these presents and of such election, be vested with all the powers, authorities, and privileges which any member of the said Corporation is hereby invested with. And in case any other extraordinary meeting or meetings of the said Corporation shall at any time or times be judged necessary for the promoting the interest and business of the said Corporation, we do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, will, declare, and ordain, that it shall and may be lawful for our said Corporation to meet from time to time, at such days and times, and at such places in our said city of New York, and upon such notices or summons as shall for that purpose from time to time be settled, established, directed, ordained, and appointed for that purpose, shall together with the President, or one of the Vice Presidents of the said Corporation for the time being, be a legal meeting of the said Corporation; and they, or the major part of them so met, shall have full power and authority to act, transact, do, and perform all and singular whatsoever may be transacted, done, and performed at any of the hereby stated meetings aforesaid of the said Corporation, saving and except the electing members, making laws, ordinances and statutes, and disposing of the real estates of the said Corporation. And our will and pleasure is, that until the same shall be otherwise regulated as aforesaid, that the meetings of the said Corporation shall be

at stated meetings only,

to elect and choose,

who are to have all the privileges that any member is hereby invested with.

Extraordinary meeting,

to meet upon notice,

to be legal,

but not to elect members, make laws or dispose of real estate.

To be held in the Exchange.

held in the great room of the building commonly called the Exchange, situate at the lower end of the street called Broad street, in the said city of New York: and that until the same shall be also otherwise regulated as aforesaid, that no act done in any meeting of the said Corporation shall be legal, good, or valid, unless the President, or one of the Vice Presidents, and twenty others of the members of the said Corporation at the least, be present, and the major part of them consenting thereto. And we do further give and grant to the said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, that it shall and may be lawful for the President of the said Corporation, at all times hereafter for ever, to appoint a door-keeper, one or more messenger or messengers, and all such other inferior officers as shall by him be thought necessary for the said Corporation, and to displace them and any or every of them at his will and pleasure. *Provided nevertheless*, That no such door-keeper, messenger, or other officer shall hold his or their office or offices by virtue of any such appointment, longer than until the then next lawful meeting of our said Corporation, unless such person or persons so appointed shall be then approved of by the majority of such of the members of the said Corporation as shall then be met.—And we do further, of our especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, for us, our heirs and successors, grant and ordain, that when and as often as the President, or any Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary of the said Corporation, shall misdemean himself in his or their said offices respectively, and thereupon a complaint or charge in writing shall be exhibited against him or them, by any member of the said Corporation, at any legal meeting or meetings of the said Corporation, that it shall and may be lawful for the members of the said Corporation then met, or the major part of them, from time to time, upon examination and due proof, to suspend or discharge such President, Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary, from their offices respectively, although the yearly or other time for their respective services shall not be expired, any thing before in these presents con-

No act done in any meeting to be valid [unless]

tained to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.—And further, we do by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, give and grant unto the said Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce in the city of New York, in America, and their successors for ever, that this our present Charter shall be deemed, adjudged, and construed in all cases most favorably, and for the best benefit and advantage of our said Corporation, and for promoting the good intentions and designs herein before expressed, inducing us graciously to grant the same; and that this our present grant, being entered on record as herein after is expressed, or the enrolment thereof, shall be for ever hereafter good and effectual in the law, according to our true intent and meaning hereinbefore declared, without any other license, grant, or confirmation from us, our heirs and successors, hereafter by the said Corporation to be had or obtained, notwithstanding, the not reciting or misrecital, or not naming, or misnaming of the aforesaid offices, franchises, privileges, immunities, or other the premises, or any of them, and although no writ of *ad quo damnum*, or other writs, inquisitions, or precepts had been upon this occasion had, made, issued, or prosecuted, any statute, act, ordinance, or provision, or other matter or thing to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding. In testimony whereof, we have caused these our letters to be made patent, and the great seal of our said province to be hereunto affixed, and the same to be entered on record in our Secretary's office, for our said province, in one of the books of patents there remaining.

Witness our trusty and well-beloved CADWALLADER COLDEN, Esquire, our Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-chief of our said province of New York, and the territories depending thereon in America, by and with the advice and consent of our Counsel for our said province, at Fort George, in our city of New York, this thirteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy, and of our reign the tenth.

AN ACT

To remove doubts concerning the Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce, and to confirm the rights and privileges thereof.

Passed the 13th April, 1784.

Preamble.

WHEREAS George the Third, king of Great Britain, did, on the thirteenth day of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy, grant certain letters patent to the persons therein named, under the great seal of the then colony of New York, which said letters patent are in the words following, that is to say:—

(Here follows a recital of the preceding Charter.)

Reciting the petitioners for a revival of the Corporation.

And whereas, Samuel Broome, Jeremiah Platt, John Broome, Benjamin Ledyard, Thomas Randall, Robert Bowne, Daniel Phœnix, Jacob Morris, Eliphalet Brush, James Jarvis, John Blagge, Viner Van Zandt, Stephen Sayre, Jacobus Van Zandt, Nathaniel Hazard, Thomas Hazard, Abraham P. Lott, Abraham Duryee, William Malcom, John Alsop, Isaac Sears, James Beekman, Abraham Lott, Comfort Sands, Joseph Blackwell, Joshua Sands, Lawrence Embree, George Embree, Gerardus Duyckinck, Jun., Cornelius Ray, Anthony Griffiths, Thomas Tucker, John Berrian, Isaac Roosevelt, John Franklin, John H. Kip, Henry H. Kip, Archibald Currie, David Currie, and Jonathan Lawrence, all of the said city, Merchants, have, by their humble petition set forth, that the said letters patent, and the powers and privileges exercised and enjoyed under the same, have greatly promoted the commercial

interest of this State, and that great and daily inconveniences and injury are suffered by the suspension thereof, and have prayed that the said letters patent, with all and singular the power and franchises therein contained, may be revived, confirmed and established—

1. *Be it therefore enacted by the people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same,* That the said letters patent, and all and singular the powers, rights, privileges, franchises and immunities therein and thereby granted, shall be, and the same are hereby ratified and confirmed; and the said letters patent, and all and every other former rights, privileges, franchises, and immunities therein, and thereby granted, shall be and remain in full force and efficacy, notwithstanding any non-user or mis-user of any of the said powers, rights, privileges, franchises and immunities heretofore had, committed, done or suffered, between the nineteenth day of April, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, and the day of the passing of this Act. And the said Samuel Broome, Jeremiah Platt, John Broome, Benjamin Ledyard, Thomas Randall, Robert Bowne, Daniel Phœnix, Jacob Morris, Eliphalet Brush, James Jarvis, John Blagge, Viner Van Zandt, Stephen Sayre, Jacobus Van Zandt, Nathaniel Hazard, Thomas Hazard, Abraham P. Lott, Abraham Duryee, William Malcom, John Alsop, Isaac Sears, James Beekman, Abraham Lott, Comfort Sands, Joseph Blackwell, Joshua Sands, Lawrence Embree, George Embree, Gerardus Duyckinck, Jun., Cornelius Ray, Anthony Griffiths, Thomas Tucker, John Berrian, Isaac Roosevelt, John Franklin, John H. Kip, Henry H. Kip, Archibald Currie, David Currie, and Jonathan Lawrence, shall and may for ever hereafter remain, continue, and be a body corporate and politic in deed, fact and name, by the name of "THE CORPORATION OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK," and by that name to sue, plead and be impleaded, and to answer and to be answered.

Charter of the Chamber of Commerce confirmed

notwithstanding any non-user between the 19th of April, 1775, & the date of this Act.

Members of the present Chamber of Commerce.

Name of the present Chamber of Commerce.

Names of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

2. *And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That the said John Alsop shall be the present President, the above named Isaac Sears, the present Vice President; that the above named John Broom, the present Treasurer, and the above named John Blagge, the present Secretary of the said Corporation, who shall hold, possess, and enjoy their said respective offices, until the first Tuesday in May now next ensuing; and in case any or either of the said persons hereby nominated and appointed to the respective offices aforesaid, shall happen to die, or shall neglect or refuse to act in or execute, or shall be removed from such office or offices respectively before the said first Tuesday in May next, that then, and in every such case, it shall and may be lawful for the members of the said body corporate to meet at such time and times, and at such place and places within the said city as they shall for that purpose appoint, and upon such notices or summons as have heretofore been used and established by the said body corporate, and then and there, by the majority of such as shall so meet, to elect and choose other or others to the said office or offices respectively, in the place of him or them so dying, or neglecting or refusing to act, or being removed, in the manner heretofore used in the annual elections of the like officers, which person or persons so elected and chosen, shall enjoy and exercise the said office or offices, and all and singular the privileges and powers thereto belonging or appertaining, until the said first Tuesday in May next.

Their continuance in office.

When and how other officers shall be elected to the Presidency, &c.

All former rights &c., to be enjoyed by the Corporation.

3. *And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That the Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce, of the State of New York, and their successors, shall and may for ever hereafter, peaceably have, hold, use, and enjoy all and every the rights, powers, liberties, privileges, franchises, usages, lands, tenements, estates and hereditaments, which have heretofore, by virtue of the above recited Charter, been given or granted unto the said Corporation, by the name of the Corporation of the Chamber of Commerce of the city of New York, in America.

BY-LAWS

OF

The Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York.

As Amended, July 5, 1855.

ARTICLE I.

The members of the "Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York," shall meet on the first Thursday in each month, to transact such business as may be laid before them.

ARTICLE II.

The meetings of this Corporation shall be at one o'clock P. M., unless otherwise determined by the President.

ARTICLE III.

The officers of the Chamber shall be chosen by ballot, annually, at the first regular meeting in May, and a majority of the votes given, shall be necessary, in each instance, to constitute a choice. The persons so elected shall take the oath or affirmation prescribed by the Charter, and shall continue in office for the space of one year, or until their successors have become duly qualified according to the Charter. In all cases where officers elected decline to accept, or resign, there shall be an election held to supply any such vacancy, at such time as the presiding officer, or a vote of the Chamber may direct. No person shall be eligible for the office of President, Vice President, or Treasurer, for more than three years in succession, unless by the unanimous consent of the Chamber.

ARTICLE IV.

Every person desirous of becoming a member of this Corporation, shall be nominated at one stated meeting, and balloted for at the next regular meeting, and if five or more negatives shall appear against any candidate, he cannot be admitted a member, nor be again proposed until after the expiration of a year from the time of such rejection.

ARTICLE V.

Every person who may hereafter be admitted a member of this Corporation, shall pay to the Treasurer, for the use thereof, the sum of ten dollars, and every member shall pay three dollars annual dues, payable on the 1st of May.

ARTICLE VI.

The President, with the advice of the members of this Chamber, shall appoint the place of meeting: it shall be the duty of the President to superintend the affairs of this Corporation; all motions relative to business or adjournment shall be addressed to him; and he shall sign the annual accounts of the Treasurer, when the same shall have been duly audited.

ARTICLE VII.

The Vice Presidents, in the order of seniority, shall, in the absence of the President, have the same power and authority that the President possesses when personally present.

ARTICLE VIII.

The President, or in his absence either of the Vice Presidents, shall, on the requisition of five members, call a special meeting of the Chamber, on such days and at such hours as may be deemed expedient: *provided always*, that the business to be acted on shall be designated in the notice of such meeting, and that none other be acted on but by unanimous consent.

ARTICLE IX.

The Treasurer shall enter an account of all moneys received and expended by him for the use of this Chamber: his account

shall be fairly stated, and produced for the inspection of the members, at every annual meeting; it shall be audited on or before the first Tuesday in May, in every year, and signed by the auditors who may be appointed for that purpose, and countersigned by the President; the Treasurer for the last year shall deliver over to his successor the cash remaining in his hands, as also any stock or securities, the property of this Chamber, together with the books, chest and key; or in the absence of the Treasurer elect, the same shall be delivered to the President.

ARTICLE X.

The Secretary shall keep a fair register of all proceedings, orders, rules and regulations of the Chamber, which shall be regularly entered in the book of minutes; in the absence of the Secretary, the President shall appoint one of the members to officiate in his place for the time being.

ARTICLE XI.

No member of this Corporation, after having appeared in the Chamber, shall leave the same previous to adjournment, without permission from the President.

ARTICLE XII.

There shall be a Standing Committee for determining such mercantile disputes as may be submitted to it, to be styled the COMMITTEE OF ARBITRATION. This Committee shall consist of five members, of whom one shall be elected by ballot at each annual meeting of the Chamber, to serve as Chairman for the year ensuing; of the other four members, to be elected also by ballot, one shall retire in rotation every month, the vacancy being filled at every monthly meeting of the Chamber, by balloting for a new member. Neither the Chairman, nor any member of the Committee, shall be eligible for a new term, till after the interval of one year from the close of his last term of service; but in case a vacancy is not duly supplied, the retiring member shall hold over till an election for this purpose takes place.

There shall be also a Standing Committee, to be styled the

COMMITTEE OF APPEAL, to which an appeal may be made from the decision of the *Committee of Arbitration*, under such regulations as the Chamber may at any time adopt.

The Committee of Appeals shall consist of the President of the Chamber, the first and second Vice Presidents and the Treasurer, together with the Chairman of the Committee of Arbitration. The Secretary of the Chamber shall serve as the stated Clerk of the Committee of Appeals. The Committee of Arbitration shall choose their own Clerk, either in or out of their number. A majority of each Committee shall constitute a quorum. Each Committee shall keep minutes of its proceedings and decisions, which shall be open to the inspection of the members of the Chamber.

ARTICLE XIII.

The Committee of Arbitration shall meet whenever business requires, at such hour and place as they may find most convenient; and all parties having mercantile disputes to be referred to the Committee, shall make statements of their cases in writing, directed to the Chairman. Each party shall have the right of producing witnesses, under the regulation and direction of the Committee. In all cases each party shall pay such fee as the Committee may deem reasonable. In the absence of the Chairman the Committee may elect a Chairman *pro tem.*

ARTICLE XIV.

No decision of the Committee of Arbitration shall be appealed from in any case in which the amount involved does not exceed $100, (one hundred dollars,) nor in any case which has been unanimously decided by the whole Committee, unless the amount exceeds $500, (five hundred dollars.) In all other cases an appeal may be made by either party, provided a notice of such appeal be served upon the Chairman of the Committee of Arbitration, within ten days of the delivery of the decision of the Committee to the parties interested. These conditions being complied with, the Chairman of the Committee of Arbitration shall deliver the documents pertaining to the case, together with a copy of the proceedings of the Committee, to the Secre-

tary of the Chamber, whose duty it shall be thereupon to call a meeting of the Committee of Appeal.

ARTICLE XV.

Bills against the Chamber shall be presented at a regular meeting, by the Secretary, and if approved, shall be certified by the Secretary, and left with the Treasurer for payment.

ARTICLE XVI.

A Standing Committee of five members shall be annually appointed, in such manner as the Chamber may direct, to visit, from time to time, the library of the "Mercantile Library Association;" to make inquiries into its affairs, with the consent of its directors, and to report thereon, as may be deemed necessary to this Corporation.

ARTICLE XVII.

The President, or one of the Vice Presidents, with the consent of the members present, shall have power to adjourn a meeting, provided a number sufficient for transacting business do not attend.

ARTICLE XVIII.

To preserve order, and to expedite the business of the Chamber, every member who has proposals to make, or reasons for, or objections to offer against any proposition presented, shall rise and address the President; and no person shall interrupt another while speaking; and all motions, before they can be debated, shall be reduced to writing.

ARTICLE XIX.

No rules, regulations or orders for the government of this Chamber, shall be binding on the members thereof, unless proposed in writing at a preceding stated meeting, in order that the general sense of the Corporation may be taken.

ARTICLE XX.

Nine members, of which number the President or one of the

Vice Presidents must always be one, shall be necessary to form a quorum, in order to transact business, and to ballot for members.

ARTICLE XXI.

No persons can be admitted members of this Corporation, but merchants and others whose avocations are connected with the trade and commerce of the country, and who are American citizens; or continue members, if not residents in the city of New York, or regularly transacting business there; but the privilege contained in Article XII. may be extended to persons other than those who are members, or to persons not qualified to become members of this Corporation, subject to such regulations as the Chamber may, from time to time, direct.

HISTORY

OF THE

NEW YORK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

WITH

NOTICES

OF

SOME OF ITS MOST DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS.

AN ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

ORIGINALLY DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NOVEMBER 21, 1848.

REVISED, ENLARGED, AND BROUGHT DOWN TO MAY, 1856.

BY CHARLES KING.

TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

GENTLEMEN—

In preparing a new edition of the historical sketch of the Chamber of Commerce, which appeared some eight years ago, in the form of an address before the New-York Historical Society, and which was then published by your order, I comply very readily with a request, with which you recently honored me, to bring down the memoir to the present date.

The sketch is mainly in the shape in which it first appeared, the additions being for the most part of a date subsequent to that at which the address was delivered, including biographical notices of the several presidents who in the interval have occupied the Chair.

I had for a time cherished a project of expanding the sketch into a formal history of the Chamber, with copious extracts from the many able papers on Finance and Commerce, which from time to time were presented to and acted upon by it; but after some preparation and more reflection, I found these would lead me too far, and that in making a large volume, as I must have done, I might diminish rather than add to the interest with which a more sketchy, though, as far as it goes, nevertheless, accurate and faithful, memoir of the Chamber might hope to be received.

I confess, however, that it was not without reluctance that I abandoned the plan, especially of giving extracts from reports, made at different times to the Chamber, upon subjects connected with Currency, Tariff duties, the Warehousing system, Inspection laws, &c.—subjects yet open and undetermined—and which in these reports are often treated with a weight of reasoning and finish of style that would do honor to any body.

Perhaps when the rust of another century shall rest upon these records, the merchant princes of that day may desire to see and know what the early founders of their craft thought and said on questions that may even then be still unsettled, and may cause to be sought out and published for general information what now is shut up in books sealed to the public eye.

Bear with me, gentlemen, as one who estimates most highly the importance and the dignity of the mercantile profession, if, before concluding this introductory notice, I take leave to repeat emphatically the expression of regret embodied in the Memoir, that the interest of the body of merchants in the Chamber of Commerce is not what formerly it was, nor at all commensurate with the great services rendered in times past by that body, both to commerce and to the country—nor with the proper pride which should be felt in belonging to an association of such illustrious annals and such capabilities for good.

Yet there are recent indications, as I gladly learn, of renewed interest on the part of the members of the Chamber in its proceedings, not the least significant evidence of which is to be found in the contemplated quarterly meetings in the evening, for the discussion of important questions pending before the Chamber.

Efficiency, and that which so much contributes to efficiency—an honorable *esprit de corps*—will surely be promoted by such meetings.

I conclude with expressing the hope that with the growing wealth and intelligence of this great commercial metropolis, will one day come the desire to emulate at once, and to commemorate those merchants of its earlier days, by giving to the Chamber which they founded a fitting habitation, and restoring its deliberations and acts to their pristine influence and honor.

I am, with great respect,

Your obe'd serv't,

CHARLES KING.

HISTORY.

The Chamber of Commerce of New York, is my theme. The date of the Association reaches far back in our young annals, and is older by many years than the Republic, and the Constitution which makes us one people.

It was instituted by voluntary agreement of the leading merchants of this city, in the year 1768. It is, therefore, antecedent in its origin to the Revolution which emancipated the Colonies.

It is a remarkable fact, and one significant of the method and care which are such essential elements in the commercial character, that from the day of its origin until this day, the Records of the Chamber of Commerce have been preserved unbroken and unmutilated, and it is to the Books of Minutes of the Chamber that I am indebted for very much of whatever may prove attractive in this essay.

The period in which this Association was formed, was one of deep interest. For several preceding years, the feelings of the Colonists had been deeply roused by the pretension of the Mother Country to impose taxes upon the Colonies—the Stamp Act, which was enacted early in the year 1765, had excited the spirit of a people habituated to consider representation as the counterpart of taxation, and who not being represented in the British Parliament, would not consent to be taxed by it.

New York took the lead in opposition, and among the persons prominent in that opposition, were several distinguished merchants, whom we shall soon meet with as among the founders and officers of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Stamp Act was to take effect on Nov. 1, 1765. But previous to that day, the first Congress of the American Colonies was assembled in this city, on the 7th October, "in opposition," as the journal of the proceedings has it, "to the tyrannical acts of the British Parliament."

It concerns not a little the honor of New York, and essentially the renown of the Chamber of Commerce, that the moving spirits who prompted the assembling of this Congress should be identified. It stands as the record of history, that the first Congress of the American Colonies—a Congress not unaptly characterized as the Egg of the Republic, *ovum Republicæ*—was assembled on the recommendation of the Legislature of Massachusetts, and literally this is true. But antecedent to this recommendation, which bears date June, 1765, a Corresponding Committee of the New York Assembly, appointed in October, 1764, had made the proposal for holding a Congress of Delegates, and upon their application the project was agitated in different Legislatures. Although, therefore, the final action took place upon the explicit recommendation of the Massachusetts Legislature, that recommendation was influenced and hastened, if not determined, by the New York Committee of Correspondence. Who composed that Committee, and what relation its members bear to the subject now to be treated, will appear in the sequel.

The first measure of the Congress of '65 was a *Declaration of the Rights and Grievances of the Colonies*, a paper asserting for the Colonists all the rights and liberties of subjects born within the kingdom of Great Britain; among which are the exclusive power to tax themselves, and the privilege of a trial by jury.

At this time Lieut. Governor Colden exercised the functions of Governor, and made himself exceedingly obnoxious to the people of New York by his determination to enforce the Stamp Act. The stamps had arrived in a merchant ship; but finding the exasperation so great, they were transferred from it to one of the ships of war in the harbor, and subsequently for safe keeping to the Governor's house within the fort, which was a place of some strength, and under the guns moreover of the ships of war.

On the 31st October, (Congress then sitting,) the merchants had a meeting, and resolved not to import goods from England. This decisive step—first taken by the New York merchants—was followed elsewhere, and led to a general non-intercourse. The next evening a large concourse of people assembled in the fields, where the Park now is, and hung the Lieut. Governor in effigy, while another party broke open the carriage house of the Governor, under the muzzle of the guns of the fort, drew forth his carriage, and, tearing up the wooden palings which surrounded the Bowling Green, made a bonfire of them, into which was thrust the carriage, with another effigy of the Lieut. Governor seated in it, to be consumed. It is certainly to be taken as a proof of the unwillingness of Gov. Colden to resort to harsh measures, that these popular excesses were permitted to be consummated under the guns of Fort George, where was a garrison amply sufficient to sweep the rioters from the streets.

These and other demonstrations, however, were decisive. The Governor consented to give up the obnoxious stamps, and on the 5th November, the Common Council, through their Mayor, John Cruger, received from the Governor all the packages of stamps sent out from England—and thus the people triumphed.

Early in the next year, 1766, the Stamp Act was repealed, under the influence of the first Pitt, (afterward Earl of Chatham,) and the joy diffused in America by that event caused the people to overlook for a time the declaratory act accompanying the repeal, which asserted the right and power of the Imperial Parliament to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever.

The delight of the people of New York with the repeal of the Stamp Act was excessive. On 23d June, 1766, the Legislature of the Colony voted that an Equestrian Statue be erected in the Bowling Green, to George III., to perpetuate to the latest posterity the deep sense had of his goodness. On the motion of John Cruger, a delegate from the city, and acting under the instructions of his constituents, an appropriation was also made for a statue of Chatham, which was placed in Wall Street, at the junction of William Street, on the 7th September, 1770. On the south side of the pedestal was this inscription:

"This Statue of the Right Honorable WILLIAM PITT, Earl of Chatham, was erected as a public testimony of the grateful sense the Colony of New York retains of the many eminent services he rendered to America, particularly in promoting the repeal of the Stamp Act, A. D., 1770.

Neither the statues nor the gratitude of those who erected them, outlived the generation that voted them. The marble statue of Pitt was tumbled from its pedestal, the head was broken from the body, and the mutilated trunk had, until within a few years, been thrown among the rubbish of the public yard of the Corporation.

The statue of King George, being of lead, served a better turn. It was broken into pieces during the Revolutionary war, sent up to Connecticut, where, in the family of the late Oliver Wolcott, the ladies assisting, the metal was run into bullets to be used against the troops of the same King George.

Eighty-one years ago commenced the existence of the Chamber of Commerce. There are yet living some few—very few—who were in being with the men who founded this Association; there survive very many of the relatives and descendants of those founders, and for all it will be a natural desire to know who were the merchants of that distant day that gave form and vitality to a Corporation which has exercised, at different times, no small influence, not only upon the mercantile character and prosperity of this city, but upon the political destinies of the nation. In deference to such feeling, the annexed extract from the first Book of Minutes is presented, setting forth the names of the founders, the objects proposed to be accomplished, and the rules for the government of the Chamber:

" *Whereas*, mercantile societies have been found very useful in trading cities, for promoting and encouraging Commerce, supporting Industry, adjusting disputes relative to trade and navigation, and procuring such laws and regulations as may be found necessary for the benefit of trade in general.

"For which purpose, and to establish such a society in the City of New York, the following persons convened on the first Tuesday in, and being the 5th day of, April, 1758:

John Cruger,	Thomas White,
Elias Desbrosses,	Miles Sherbrooke,
James Jauncey,	Walter Franklin,
Jacob Walton,	Robert Ross Waddle,
Robert Murray,	Acheson Thompson,
Hugh Wallace,	Lawrence Kortright,
George Folliot,	Thomas Randel,
William Walton,	William McAdam,
Samuel Verplanck,	Isaac Low,
Theophylact Bache,	Anthony Van Dam,

who agreed that the said Society of Merchants should consist of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and such Merchants as already are, or hereafter may become, members thereof, to be called and known by the name of The New York Chamber of Commerce. The members present unanimously chose the following officers for this year, to commence the first Tuesday of May next:—John Cruger, President; Hugh Wallace, Vice President; Elias Desbrosses, Treasurer; Anthony Van Dam, Secretary."

The Society then proceeded to adopt their rules, which, in substance, were:

1. Society to meet the first Tuesday in every month for the transaction of business, and to establish such rules for the order and good government of the Society as they may think proper and find necessary.

2. On the first Tuesday of May, August, November and February, a quarterly meeting to be held, when all accounts are to be settled and new members be balloted for.

3. Officers to be chosen annually, by ballot, on first Tuesday of May, and to hold one year. Admission fee of members, five Spanish dollars, and quarterly payment of one dollar. Members to be bound to comply with the rules and regulations of the Society, of which entry is to be made in books kept for the purpose, on pain of being stricken from the list of members.

4. Candidates for admission to give their names to the President on the first day of the month preceding a quarterly meeting, the decision to be by ballot, three nays exclude. A person thus excluded cannot be re-nominated during the term

of the President under whom he was excluded, but may be presented afterward. A person three times rejected never to be admitted.

5. Room for meeting to be provided by the Treasurer at the cost of the members, so that the cost do not exceed one shilling for each.

6. The Treasurer to provide a strong chest wherein to deposit their cash, books and papers, with three different good locks, the key of one to be kept by the President, another by the Treasurer, and the third by the Secretary; the chest, for the present, to be kept by the Treasurer.

7. *Twenty-one* members to be a *quorum* for business, of whom the President or Vice President always to be one.

8. President to appoint place of meeting. Nothing to be done without him, and he to sign the Treasurer's accounts, and generally superintend the affairs of the Society.

9. The Vice President, in the absence of the President, to have all his power, keep his key, &c.

10 and 11, regulate the duties of the Treasurer and Secretary.

12. Exacts a fine of *two shillings* for non-attendance at *monthly* meetings, and *four* for non-attendance at the *quarterly* meetings, unless disabled by sickness or absence from the city at a greater distance than six miles.

13. Authorises the President to appoint a Doorkeeper.

14. No new regulations to be made except when proposed at a preceding meeting.

15. President, or in his absence, the Vice President, may, on any emergency, call the Chamber together; the hour of meeting to be always *six, P. M.*

The following gentlemen, members of the Society, not being present at the meeting, assented to these rules:

John Alsop,	Henry White,
Philip Livingston,	James McEvers.

From this day forward the meetings appear to have been punctually attended. The minutes are carefully written up, and they uniformly record, not only the names of the members present, but those of the absentees, with the cause of ab-

sence; as, for instance, on 3d May, '68, we find this entry of absentees:

JOHN CRUGER, President, not well.
WM. WALTON, JR., in Connecticut.
WM. MCADAM, in the Gout, (so recorded.)
JAMES MCEVERS, not well.
PHIL. LIVINGSTON.

It was also resolved on that day, that the meetings be held at Bolton and Sigel's—of which spot I have not been able to find a trace.

At the monthly meeting in June, in order to insure punctuality to the hour of meeting, it was determined that a fine of one shilling be paid by each absentee at the hour of meeting, 6 o'clock, and the subsequent minutes record regularly the names of those thus fined, as well as the names of absentees.

The Chamber already began to occupy itself with subjects of large bearing and general concern. A depreciated currency was at that period one of the evils of the times, and as each Colony issued its own currency, confusion and discredit ensued.

The Paper currency of Pennsylvania seems to have been particularly objectionable, and a resolution for discouraging its passing in the Colony of New York was only lost by three votes, on the 5th July, and subsequently it was referred for consideration whether some method should not be fallen upon "to establish a paper currency in this city."

At the same meeting another quite as questionable proposition was submitted, for regulating the price of flour and bread casks. This was, however, so much in harmony with the interests, as was believed, of consumers, and so entirely, as seems to have been assumed, within the competency of the Chamber to control, that at the August meeting "it was *unanimously agreed*, that from and after the 15th inst., no member of this Society will give more than 25*s*. 6*d*. per ton for flour and bread casks, including nailing." The millers and flour dealers having refused compliance with the terms of this resolution, it was, at the October meeting, decided by the Chamber to send Mr. Wm. Neilson to Philadelphia, there to purchase from 1,500 to 2,000 barrels of flour, to be shipped to New York. Members to be supplied with what they need, and the balance to be sold.

At the next meeting in November, it was ordered that each member pay £50 to Mr. Lewis Pintard, who went to Philadelphia in lieu of Mr. Neilson, toward the purchase of flour—the same to be replaced by him out of the sales of flour, the profit or loss to be ratably shared. This vigorous proceeding brought the flour dealers and bakers to terms; a deputation from them attended the Chamber, and after vainly endeavoring to induce that body to reconsider their resolution, and agree to the prices of 28*s.* instead of 25*s.* 6*d.*, the *maximum* named by the Chamber, the flour dealers gave in, and agreed to charge no more than 25*s.* 6*d.*

The cargo of flour from Philadelphia was nevertheless imported and sold by order of the Chamber, by Mr. Van Dam, their Secretary, who was allowed 2½ per cent. commissions.

The subject of damages on Protested Bills of Exchange, received early attention.

On the 1st November, a Committee, consisting of Hugh Wallace, Samuel Verplanck, Isaac Low, Jacob Walton, and John Moore, to whom had been referred the question as to damages on Inland and West India Bills, reported, that for Inland Bills, 5 per cent., and for Bills on or from the West Indies, 10 per cent. damages be paid.

The Chamber adopted the Report, and resolved that its members would be governed thereby, and that the "full amount of the bill, with the stipulated damages in full for re-exchange, cost of protest, postage, &c., is due and payable immediately on the return of the bill with protest."

It was referred to the same committee to inquire and report at the next meeting, as to whether the 20 per cent. "now generally paid" on protested bills on Europe, be "in full compensation for damages, costs of protests, postage," &c., and whether to be received in money by the holders of the protested bill at the Exchange current when it shall be returned, or in a bill of exchange with the damages added.

At the December meeting, this committee reported that 20 per cent. ought to be paid on European bills, in full for all damages, re-exchanges, cost of protest, postage, &c., and that all European bills returned protested, ought to be paid immediately on return of said bill with proper protest, together with the 20 per cent. damages, in money, at the crurent exchange in

New York, without regard to the Exchange at which said bill was bought or sold.

The Chamber unanimously adopted that report.

The subject of Inspection Laws early attracted the notice of the Chamber, and at the December meeting a Report from a Committee was adopted, recommending that application be made to the Legislature, for the appointment of a *single* Inspector of Flour, and a single Inspector of Ashes, with power to each to name his own deputies, as much more likely to attain the object of all inspection laws, a uniform and reliable standard, that under the system then existing, of appointing several inspectors, between whom, as was well said in the Report, the competition necessarily was, "not who shall inspect the best flour, but who shall suffer the worst to pass inspection." As regarded pot and pearl ashes, is was recommended that they be divided into three classes, 1st, 2d, and 3d quality, and that both flour and ashes bear on the cask the brand of the manufacturer's name, and his county, over and above the Inspector's brand.

It is alleged among the reasons for the severer inspection of flour, that "the wheat brought to this market from Jersey and Maryland is as good, and the wheat brought from the North River in particular, *much better* than any carried to Philadelphia," and therefore, that any inferiority of New York to Philadelphia flour "must be ascribed to defect in the manufacture and the present mode of inspection."

In 1769 the Chamber, by permission of the Mayor and Corporation, began to hold their meetings in the room over the Exchange, the Chamber to occupy it one year free of rent, they undertaking to furnish the room, and after that to pay an annual rent of £20. The Exchange here referred to was built on arches across the foot of Broad street, in a line with Water street. Under these arches itinerant preachers occasionally held forth. This building was taken down after the Revolution.*

At the April meeting in '69, we find the Chamber occupying itself with regulating the *tare* on butter and lard firkins, and the quantity that shall constitute a *ton* of goods. But the pe-

* Watson's Annals, p. 72, Ancient Edifices.

riod had arrived when political agitation and politlcal action were to find scope in the Chamber of Commerce.

The Stamp Act had aroused the spirit of the Colonies, which resolutely refused to submit to taxation by Parliament where they had no representatives.

The first Congress of the American Colonies assembled in New York on the 9th October, '65, as has been already stated. New Hampshire alone, of all the Colonies, *declined* sending Deputies to this Congress. None attended from Virginia or North Carolina, because the Legislatures of those Colonies were not in session when the Circular from the Massachusetts Legislature was addressed to the other Colonies. All the others were represented.

The Delegates to this Congress, from the State of New York, were Robert R. Livingston, John Cruger, Phil. Livingston, Wm. Bayard and Leonard Lispenard—of whom, all but R. R. Livingston were at the time, or afterwards became, members of the Chamber of Commerce.

In proportion, therefore, to the influence exercised by this Congress upon subsequent events, and upon the fortunes and liberties of America, may honor be claimed for the Chamber of Commerce, which furnished four out of the five Delegates from the State of New York, in that Congress.

Of its acts, mention has already been made. In the course of the year '69, Parliament passed an act imposing duties on tea, paper, glass, &c., professedly for revenue, and not with a view to regulate Commerce.

The Colonies resisted this act as they had resisted the Stamp Act, and upon the same ground. As the most effectual mode of defeating this new scheme of taxation, associations were immediately entered into by Boston, New York and Philadelphia, for the non-importation of goods from Great Britain; and in the course of this and the ensuing year, like associations were formed in all the Colonies, and the popular feeling everywhere gave effect to the measures. The Assembly of the Colony of New York partook of and approved the popular feeling, for we find in the Minutes of May 2, 1769, the following entry:

"The President reported that the Honorable the House of Assembly, had directed him to signify their thanks to the Merchants of this City and Colony, for their patriotic conduct

in declining the importation of goods from Great Britain at this juncture—and until the acts of Parliament, which the Assembly had declared unconstitutional and subversive of the rights and liberties of the people of this Colony, should be repealed."

A committee consisting of Messrs. Desbrosses, Alsop, Low, Kortright, McAdam, and W. Franklin, was named to report an answer to the Assembly, which was done at the same sitting.

It so happened that on this occasion the President of the Chamber of Commerce, John Cruger, was also Speaker of the Assembly, and this explains the form in which the thanks of that body were conveyed to the Chamber.

Mr. Cruger, who was the first President of the Chamber, and served two years, was conspicuous both as a politician and a merchant; he was born in this city, in July, 1710—the son of John Cruger and Maria Cuyler. The father was Alderman of Dock (now first) Ward for twenty-two years, and subsequently served five years as Mayor of the city, and died in that office in 1744. The son, John, of whom we are treating, followed in the footsteps of his father—served as Alderman of Dock Ward for two years, and in 1755 became Mayor of the city, and continued in that office ten years—being still Mayor when, in 1765, he was chosen Speaker of the Assembly, as above stated.

While thus doubly honored as Speaker of the Assembly of the Colony, and Chief Magistrate of the city of New York, he was also constituted, as we have seen, Delegate to the first Congress; and it is of record that he and Robert R. Livingston were the moving spirits of that delegation. The same individuals had constituted the Committee of Correspondence appointed by the New York Assembly in '64, to whose suggestions we have ascribed the determination of Massachusetts to invite the assembling of the Congress of '64. To the pen of John Cruger is due the "Declaration of Rights and Grievances of the Colonies," put forth by that Congress; and it is clear, from the circumstance of his constant re-election as Speaker of the Assembly, that he enjoyed the highest favor among his countrymen. His name does not appear on the records of the Chamber after May, 1775—whence it would seem to follow that he left the city when it fell into the hands of the British. He died in 1792, unmarried. His brother, Henry Cruger, was father of Col. Cruger, of the British service, Henry Cruger,

the colleague of Burke in the British Parliament, and Nicholas Cruger, an eminent West India merchant of this city, and under whose auspices the boy Alexander Hamilton came hither from Santa Cruz.

To return to the Chamber. At the meeting in May, '69, a resolution was passed, which, if it had been duly carried out, might have led to a record of commercial cases, and the decisions thereon by the Arbitration Committee, which would now constitute a body of commercial law and usages of great value.

It was decided that "all committees do report, at the next ensuing sitting of the Chamber, such differences between parties as they may have adjusted, with the names of parties and the sums awarded, together with the opinions—to the end that the same be entered on the minutes—always provided both parties consent thereto."

Another proposition was adopted at this meeting, that the Chamber have an annual public dinner—absentees therefrom to pay five shillings each.

Both these usages have fallen into disuse—both might be advantageously and agreeably revived.

The Chamber was occupied with regulating the rates of commission for transacting different sorts of business, the value of gold and silver coins, &c., &c.

The minutes of 7th Nov. present a reply by David Rittenhouse and John Montresor to a request by Mr. President Cruger, that they would calculate the latitude of the Battery—which they make out 40° 42′ 8″.

On 15th Feb., 1770, the Chamber, through their President, addressed a memorial to the acting governor, C. D. Colden, for an act of incorporation.

At the April meeting, the Charter granted by the Lieutenant Governor was received, read, and accepted. The Chamber ordered that 20 guineas be paid to the Attorney-General "for his services in perfecting the Charter."

Under this Charter the first election for officers, held on the first Tuesday (2d) of May, resulted thus:

Hon. Hugh Wallace, *President.*

Hon. Henry White, Elias Desbrosses, *Vice Presidents.*

A. Van Dam, *Secretary,* Theoph. Bache, *Treasurer.*

The great trouble of the time was a depreciated and irregular Paper Currency, and the circulation of various foreign gold and silver coins, which were clipped, sweated, and otherwise diminished in value. To meet this in part, in Aug., '70, it was, on motion of Mr. Isaac Low, resolved that the members of this Corporation would henceforth pay and receive the *half-Johannes*, weighing 8 dwts, at £3 4*s*. and for every grain overrunning they would pay three pence, and for every *grain* short they would deduct four pence.

John Cruger dissented from this resolve as one tending to impair the value of the currency, and claimed to have his dissent entered on the minutes, which was done.

A curious and rather inconvenient practice obtained at this time, of entering upon the minutes the reasoning of members in favor of any proposition made by them. Thus, on the minutes for Nov., '70, there is a long argument by I. Low, in favor of a plan he suggests for improving the quality of the New York Flour, "the grand staple of this Colony." He ascribes the superiority of the Philadelphia flour to its being ground with French burr stones, which the New York millers did not use, and therefore he desired that the Chamber should import ten or twenty pair of French burr stones, to be sold at cost only to New York millers. It being ascertained soon after that there were some on the way, on private account, the suggestion was not pressed, but the argument stands on the records.

Lord Dunmore having arrived in New York, as Governor, in December, '70, the Chamber of Commerce, through their President, made an address of congratulation to him, full of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign, George III.

On the proposal of Wm. Walton, the Chamber voted, in May, '71, that Lieut. Gov. Colden be asked to sit for his portrait for the Chamber, to be hung up in its room, in token of their gratitude for the Charter of Incorporation granted by him.

At the annual dinner, this year, as Lord Dunmore, with all the chiefs of the departments, was to dine with the Chamber, absent members were required to pay eight shillings apiece toward the cost of the entertainment.

Of Hugh Wallace, the second President of the Chamber, we have not been able to gather much information. Two brothers, of Irish origin, Hugh and Alexander, were in partnership

as merchants, both married sisters of Nicholas Low, of this city, and both embraced the English cause when the Revolution broke out—remained in the city while it was in the possession of the British troops, and retired with them from the country.

The successor of Hugh Wallace in the Presidency was Elias Desbrosses, in 1771, who served one year. He was of Huguenot descent—amassed a very large estate—and died in the city, bequeathing his wealth to his daughters, the one of whom married John Hunter, of West Chester, and the other Capt. Overing, of the British Army, but who resided until his death in this city.

Mr. Desbrosses was Alderman of the East Ward for many years, and one of the founders and liberal benefactors of the French Episcopal Church of St. Esprit, in this city—the original edifice standing in Pine street—and a liberal contributor towards the support of its Charity School. He was a Vestryman of Trinity Church from 1759 to '70, and Warden from '70 to '78.

While Mr. Desbrosses was President of the Chamber, Gov. Tryon arrived as the successor of Lord Dunmore, who was transferred to Virginia—and the most lavish expressions of loyalty were addressed on the part of the Chamber to the new Governor.

In May, '72, the Hon. Henry White was chosen President. This title of Honorable, as applied to members of the Corporation, was derived from their being members of the Governor's Council. Capt. Isaac Sears withdrew from the Association in August, '71, because of the resolution adopted at a previous meeting, fixing the rate at which Jersey paper money should be received and paid by members of the Chamber. In October following, thirteen other members of the Chamber, Roosevelt, Duyckinck, Hoffman, Beekman, Gouverneur, Lispenard, and others, withdrew from the Chamber for the same cause.

In 1773, the House of Assembly granted to the Corporation £200 per annum for five years, in order to the encouragement of a better supply of fish to the New York markets.

The Chamber accordingly offered a first and second premium, varying from £40 to £45, for the boat or vessel that should in a given time supply the market with the largest quantity of

codfish, sheepshead, mackerel, or any other fish *except* skate and ray.

In May, '73, Theophylact Bache was chosen President.

In the following month a most affectionate and eulogistic address was presented by the Chamber to General Gage, Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces in North America, on occasion of his return to England. The Address runs thus:

"*May it please your Excellency—*

"When we review your conduct as Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces, and reflect on the happiness derived to this Colony from your eminent justice, from the discipline and good order of the army, and your constant attention to secure to North America the solid effects of a series of victories so glorious to the British arms; when to these we unite your engaging manners and polite and obliging deportment, we feel, in common with the rest of our citizens, the liveliest sentiments of esteem and respect for a character so truly valuable.

"We are persuaded, sir, that as you take with you the deserved applause of the Colonies, and the cordial affection of the inhabitants of this city, long honored by your immediate residence, so your zeal and fidelity in the discharge of a trust the most important, will recommend you to the favor and approbation of our most gracious Sovereign."

General Gage replied in terms not less cordial. "I have," said he, "lived long among you, and happily, with you and your fellow-citizens. It is natural I should leave you with regret, and concern, and I beg you to believe that I carry with me sentiments the most friendly to the Colonies in general, and the warmest wishes for the prosperity and happiness of the inhabitants of New York."

This was in June, 1773, only three years before the Declaration of Independence; less than two years before the battle of Lexington, which opened the war of the Revolution, and only fifteen months before the meeting of the Congress of '74, which assembled in September of that year, in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, in which hall, in July, '76, was signed and proclaimed the Declaration of Independence.

These reminiscences derive the more point, in this connection, from the fact that Gen. Gage was, in '74, sent out to Massa-

chusetts as Governor of that Colony, after the withdrawal of the odious Hutchinson, and that it was under his orders that the detachment of troops which brought on the conflict at Lexington, was sent from Boston to destroy certain military stores at Concord.

In January, '74, the Chamber was obliged to recede from the ground it had taken on the subject of the paper money of New Jersey, which must have been the principal circulating medium of the city at that time. In consequence of the resolution of the Chamber, that its members would neither receive nor deal in it, at the current rate, the resignations of members were so numerous, in order to avoid the obligation of this resolve, and the attendance of others so negligent, that no quorum could be formed. On motion, therefore, of R. C. Livingston, it was resolved, "that the members of the Chamber be at liberty to receive and pay Jersey money as it formerly passed," and then, on motion of Mr. Charles McEvers, all the members who had resigned on account of the question, were invited to present themselves anew to be balloted for as members.

In May, '74, William Walton was chosen President, and on the same day an address was voted to Governor Tryon, on his return to England—not less affectionate, eulogistic or loyal than that to General Gage—and Gov. Tryon's reply is equally full of professions of interest for the Colony, with that of General Gage.

Of the three last named Presidents, let us pause to present brief sketches.

The Hon. W. White was a member of the Governor's Council, an Englishman by birth, and largely engaged in trade. He was faithful to his allegiance, and sided with the Mother Country against the Colonies. There are descendants of his of the third generation now living among us, maintaining, as he always maintained, an upright and honorable character.

Theophylact Bache, who was chosen President in 1773, was also of English birth, a native of Lancashire. He came to this country about 1755, being just of age, and soon after married Miss Barclay. His mercantile pursuits were chiefly with the West Indies and Newfoundland. He was also agent of the British packets which used to ply between Falmouth and New York. He is remembered as a fine specimen of a gentle-

man—courteous, hospitable, with a touch of the sportsman, loving his gun and his dog, and everywhere acceptable as a polished and agreeable companion. He died in this city in 1806, after being for a third of a century one of the Vestry of Trinity Church.

Wm. Walton, who was chosen President of the Chamber in May, 1774, was a native of this city, as is believed, son of Jacob Walton and Mary Beekman, his wife. He was extensively engaged in commerce as a partner in the house of Wm. Walton & Co., of which his uncle, Wm. Walton, commonly called Boss Walton, was the head, until his death in 1768. Wm. Walton, in 1757, married Mary, the daughter of James Delancey, some time Chief Justice and Lieut. Governor of the Province, and acting Governor in 1753, and again from 1757 to 1760. His career as a merchant was prosperous and honorable, and his social position was among the most respected in the land. He was, in common with almost all the leading men of the day, opposed to the invasion of the Colonial rights by the Government of the Parent Country, and shared in the measures first adopted for a peaceful and Constitutional redress, but in common, too, with a great many of the foremost of his fellow-citizens, he could not approve of the armed resistance to the royal authority; and when actual war broke out, he retired from the city to his country residence in New Jersey. There, however, he was unable to remain, and re-entered the city, then under British rule, thereby subjecting to confiscation his Jersey estate. He remained within the lines during the war—and it is recorded of him that, unsoured by the loss of property confiscated because he could not side with what he looked upon as rebellion—and only mindful that he was born an American, he exerted himself to alleviate the horrors to which his countrymen, prisoners to the British in New York, were subjected. He continued to reside in New York, though no longer engaged in business, till his death in 1796—leaving behind him a good name and many regrets. Among his children was Jacob, who entered the British Navy, and is well remembered, doubtless, by many who hear me, as a resident, during the latter period of his life, in this city, where he died in 1844—having attained the rank of Rear Admiral of the Red.

The Chamber of Commerce had offered, as we have stated, a bounty of premiums for bringing fish to the New-York market. This was awarded in July, 1774—Peter Parks receiving £30, for having brought 800 live Cod to market for six months from 1st November to 1st May, and Robert Hartshorne £20, for having brought 456 Sheepshead to market during the year from May, 1773, to May, 1774.

From July, 1774, to May, 1775, no quorum seems to have been formed; the minutes record the names of the few who, on the stated monthly day of meeting appeared—but no business was transacted until the annual meeting, 3d of May, 1775, when the officers were to be chosen.

Isaac Low was elected President, and John Alsop and William McAdam, Vice Presidents; Charles McEvers, Treasurer; and A. Van Dam, Secretary; but from that day until June, 1779, the Chamber was never assembled.

On Monday, 21st June, 1779, the President, Isaac Low, at the request of many members, summoned a meeting of the Chamber, and the following persons appeared:

ISAAC LOW, *President.*
WM. MCADAM, *Vice President.*
A. VAN DAM, *Secretary,*

WM. WALTON,	GABRIEL H. LUDLOW,
ISAAC CORSA,	WILLIAM STEPPLE,
ROBERT MURRAY,	HENRY WHITE,
JNO. MOORE,	BENJ. BOOTH,
WM. LAIGHT,	ALEXANDER WALLACE,
THOS. BUCHANAN,	ROBT. R. WADDEL,
WM. SETON,	RICHARD YATES,
THOMAS MILLER,	GERARD WALTON,
EDWARD LAIGHT,	AUGUSTUS VAN HORNE,
HUGH WALLACE,	LAWRENCE KORTWRIGHT.

The meeting addressed a letter, signed by all the above, to the Commandant of the city, Lieut. Governor Daniel Jones, Esq., thus explaining the objects of their assembling:

"We beg leave to inform your Excellency, that the subscribers are members of a society known by the style and title of the Chamber of Commerce, which before the present *unnatural rebellion,* assembled under certain regulations," &c. &c.

The immediate motive for re-assembling is in the same letter stated to be—

"The increase of Commerce encouraged by the proclamations of H. M.'s Commissioner, together with the success of private ships of war."

The Lieut. Governor approved very highly of the re-assembling of the Chamber, and at a special meeting, 12th July, the Superintendent of the City, at the request of Major General Patterson, asked the co-operation of the Chamber in some efficient scheme, for cleansing the city and keeping it clean, adding that the barracks, military hospital and other public buildings should be subjected to any plan agreed upon. The Chamber was also asked to express its opinion as to the expediency of regulating the price of butcher's meat, and the markets generally. The Chamber, through a Committee, made a very sensible reply. It may not be without interest, even now, to hear what they said.

After complimenting the Commandant on the readiness evinced by him to co-operate in remedying a state of things complained of by every one, the Chamber says:—"Although the business does not come within the proper sphere of the Chamber of Commerce, as not appertaining to trade, they very cheerfully accept the task."

They recommended therefor no new plan of cleaning the streets, but simply the due execution of that formerly in practice—under which, they say, "the city was once as remarkable for its cleanliness, as it is now for the contrary."

What the plan was, is not stated, but briefly, that the Corporation ordinances concerning it, only need to be revived and enforced, and made applicable, where, heretofore, the military authorities had refused—"to the barracks, military hospital," &c. "Very different," says the report, "has been the former practice relative to these public buildings, for notwithstanding repeated remonstrances, it seemed to be the opinion that nothing further was necessary than to throw the straw and dirt into the middle of the street, and leave it to the inhabitants or scavengers to remove it, in any way they pleased."

To a proposition that scavengers be employed, whose remuneration should be chiefly from an exclusive right to remove the dirt, &c., from the streets, for their own use and profit—

it is said in the report that objection was made by *some person in power* "that it would interfere with the common right of mankind, because every person who pleased had a right to take dirt out of the streets, an hypothesis," fitly adds the Report, "in our idea founded neither in reason nor in fact."

As to regulating the price of butcher's meat, "experience," says the Report, "justifies our apprehension that the remedy may prove worse than the disease." It is suggested, however, as likely to induce good results—that the time of keeping open markets be limited, and that between the months of April and October no meats, vegetables or poultry be exposed for sale after 10 o'clock A. M., and not during the remainder of the year after 11 o'clock A. M., (Saturday evenings always excepted.) And further, that no fresh provisions, (fish excepted,) vegetables or poultry be put into stores or cellers, on penalty of confiscation for the benefit of the Alms House. But although the Chamber discouraged any attempt to regulate the price of butcher's meat, the same Report suggests that cartmen's wages are too high, and should be reduced *one-third.*

During the whole period of the occupation of the city by the British, viz., from 1776 to 1783—the Chamber seems to have co-operated very zealously with the British authorities, naval and military; and they on their part seem to have relied very much upon the influence and exertions of the Chamber to render their rule of the city easy and acceptable. The Chamber was at that time thoroughly in the interest of the Mother Country, and in its votes of thanks to officers, civil, naval and military, it always speaks of the Americans as *rebels*, and the war as *unnatural.*

Very many, however, of the members left the city, and were absent during the whole period of its occupation by the British. Mr. Isaac Low, as above noted, who was chosen President in May, 1775, called the Chamber together in 1779; and its sittings under his Presidency, he being annually re-elected, are carefully entered on the minutes.

From 6th May, 1783, however, to 20th January, 1784, no meeting is recorded.

At the latter date the Chamber met, Gerard Walton, Vice President, presiding, the President, Isaac Low, having retired with the British when they evacuated the city on November 25th, 1783.

Isaac Low, nevertheless, at the commencement of the controversy between the Colonies and England, had sided with the colonial cause—but he desired, like so many others, and believed, that the dispute might be amicably adjusted, and without severing the bonds which united the two countries.

Isaac Low was an American born, as were his forefathers. The first of the family in this country was Cornelius Low, who was born in Kingston in 1670. His son Cornelius was born on the 31st March, 1700, in this city. In 1729 he was married to Johanna, daughter of Isaac Gouverneur, in whose veins ran the blood of Leisler, the first victim to arbitrary power in this Colony. Isaac Gouverneur was a descendant of Abraham Gouverneur, a French Huguenot, who married the widow of Milbourne; she was the daughter of Leisler—Milbourne having been executed with his father-in-law, on the 16th of May, 1691. In April, 1731, Isaac Low was born, at Raritan Landing, a short distance above New Brunswick, in New Jersey. He married a younger daughter of Cornelius Cuyler, many years Mayor of Albany, under the Provincial Government. He is spoken of as an upright, able magistrate—a thorough loyalist, and was father of the late Sir Cornelius Cuyler, Bart., and Lieutenant-General in the British army.

Of Mr. Isaac Low, we find this mention on occasion of his marriage, in Mrs. Grant's "Memoirs of an American Lady."

"The elder sister had married Augustus Van Cortland of Cortland's Manor. The younger sister, equally admired, though possessing a different style of beauty, more soft and debonaire, with the fairest complexion, and most cheerful simplicity of aspect, was the peculiar favorite of her aunt Schuyler, (the American lady,) above all she now took charge of. She, too, was soon after married to the esteemed patriot, Isaac Low, revered through the whole continent for his sound good sense and genuine public spirit. He was indeed happily tempered, mild and firm—and was finally the victim of steadfast loyalty."

As already stated, at the commencement of the disputes between England and the Colonies, Mr. Low sided with his native land, and being at once able and popular, he was chosen one of the Committee of Public Safety, and a Representative from the city to the Congress of 1774. But as the quarrel became exasperated, and the necessity was forced upon him to choose be-

tween what he conceived to be duty and loyalty, and the independence of the Colonies, he decided, like so many other conscientious men—erroneously as seems to us—but honestly, and to his own great detriment, for the cause and claims of the Mother Country.

Under such influences, he was a most useful and serviceable friend to the British while the city of New York was in their occupation—and as President of the Chamber of Commerce, during that whole term, used its authority and influence to advance the cause of the Mother Country, while mitigating, as far as depended on him, the calamities of such a state of things, to his own countrymen, prisoners in New York.

His younger brother, Nicholas Low, born on the Raritan in 1739, took the opposite side—espoused warmly the American cause—was honored as one of its Counsellors by repeated appointments to public office, and died in this city in 1826, at the good old age of 87—honored of man and at peace with heaven. Isaac Low retired with the retiring British army, from the land of his birth, and resided in England till his death in 1791, leaving an only son, Isaac Low, a Commissary General of the British army, now living near the village of Lyndhurst, in the New Forest, Hants.

At the first meeting of the Chamber, after the evacuation of the city, many names were proposed for admission, of men who had been absent during the war, and some of them in the public service of America.

The next meeting was on the 20th April, 1784. This was called under a law passed by the Legislature of the State of New York, upon the petition of many members who dissented from the course of the Chamber while the city was in the occupation of the British, and were advised, that the charter was by misuser *forfeited*, and therefore required a new sanction from the new State.

This memorial, and the names appended, constitute a historical document of no small interest; therefore it is embodied here:

"New York, April 20, 1784.

"The arbitrary and tyrannical conduct of Great Britain towards the late Colonies, (now States of America,) having been such as to compel the people of these States to have recourse to

arms for the defence of their liberty and property, and the invasion of the State of New York having driven the inhabitants of the city to the cruel necessity of leaving their houses and property and to retire into the country, the exercise of the rights and privileges of the Chamber were, in consequence of the war, suspended from May 3, '75, to July 6th, '79, when a number of the members assumed the exercise of the powers contained in their charter, under the patronage of the British Commanders; and the influence of the Chamber having been manifestly directed to aid the British in subjugating these States,—a number of the members and other citizens, on their return to this city, taking into consideration the state of the Chamber, and being advised by counsel that the charter of the said Chamber had been forfeited and lost by reason of the misuser and non-user of the same, they thought it most advisable to petition the Legislature for a confirmation of the said charter—in consequence of which resolution, a petition was presented by the following persons:

Samuel Broome,
George Embree,
Thomas Hazard,
Jno. Broome,
Cornelius Ray,
Abm. Duryee,
Thomas Randell,
Thomas Tucker,
Jno. Alsop,
Daniel Phœnix,
Isaac Roosevelt,
James Beekman,
Eliphalet Brush,
John R. Kipp,
Comfort Sands,
Nath. Hazard,
Jeremiah Platt,
Gerardus Duyckinck,
Abm. P. Lott,
Benj. Ledyard,
Anthony Griffiths,
Wm. Malcolm,
Robt. Bowne,
John Berrian,
Isaac Seers,
Jacob Morris,
John Franklin,
Abm. Lott,
James Jarvis,
Henry H. Kipp,
Jno. Blagge,
Arch. Currie,
Joshua Sands,
Stephen Sayre,
Jonathan Lawrence,
Joseph Blackwell,
Viner Van Zandt,
David Currie.
Lawrence Embree,
Jacobus Van Zandt."

The Legislature taking the same into consideration, granted the prayer of the petition, and did on the 13th April pass a law entitled "An act to remove doubts concerning the Chamber of Commerce, and to confirm the rights and privileges thereof," in consequence of which law the meeting as above first was called.

The first care of the meeting was to choose its officers, who were: John Alsop, President; Isaac Sears, Vice President; John Broome, Treasurer; John Blagge, Secretary, but he being abroad, D. Phœnix, was appointed *pro tem.*

Col. Malcolm, Comfort Sands and Daniel Phœnix, all of whom now appear for the first time—for they had been *out* during the British occupation—were appointed a committee to report by-laws for the government of the Chamber.

In the above list of members appears the name of Jonathan Lawrence—and we pause for a moment on this gentleman's history, as furnishing an instance of the pecuniary sacrifices made by Whigs who were driven into exile. Though differing in its details from other cases, it may be presented as a sample of the many; we may almost say, "*ex uno disce omnes.*"

At the age of thirty-four years, Jonathan Lawrence retired from this city to a seat at Hell-gate, on the banks of the East River, in his native town of Newtown, (L. I.,) with a competent fortune derived from mercantile pursuits and from inheritance. Although unambitious of political distinction, and having every thing to hazard on the issue, he entered earnestly into the agitating public questions which a few years after became the absorbing topics. He was a member of the Provincial Congress of 1775–6, as well as of the Convention of 1776–7, which formed the first Constitution of this State, and was the only attending member from Queens County while that Constitution was in progress. By an ordinance passed simultaneously with the constitution, the Convention appointed Lewis Morris, Pierre Van Cortlandt, John Morin Scott, Jonathan Lawrence, William Floyd, William Smith, of Suffolk, Isaac Roosevelt, John Jones and Philip Livingston, to be the Senators from the Southern District of the State while in possession of the enemy. Mr. Lawrence filled this post throughout the war. Besides discharging many other public duties requiring discretion, firmness and energy, he, in 1778, embarked at Black Point, in New Jer-

sey, in the fleet of Count D'Estaing, as a volunteer, on what proved to be the fruitless expedition against Rhode Island.

In 1775, the Provincial Congress appointed him to be Major of the Brigade commanded by General Woodhull, and he was connected with the operations in 1776, of that gallant martyr. By him he was despatched to the convention at Harlæm, who in their turn sent him to General Washington, at Brooklyn, for reinforcements which had been promised, but which it was found could not be spared. During these transactions the capture and dastardly butchery of General Woodhull took place, preceded by the battle, which left Long Island at the enemy's mercy. In this absence of Mr. Lawrence from home, his house was taken in possession at night by a marauding party of British soldiers. Amusing them with refreshments in the kitchen, Mrs. Lawrence and two female relatives, then on a visit to her, with the assistance of the female servants, aroused Mr. L.'s five infant children, (the oldest nine years of age,) from their beds, and abandoned the house with all its contents, except such few articles of clothing, plate and valuables as they could hastily and quietly secure. Being silently and speedily conveyed, by a faithful slave, in a boat across the river, they on the next day reached Mr. Lawrence at Harlæm, from which place the convention had just adjourned to Fishkill. Having encountered during more than seven years of exile the many difficulties and privations to which his blighted fortune subjected him, he, on the conclusion of the peace of 1783, returned to the city of New York, and in his forty-seventh year, abandoning legislative life, and collecting the very few remaining fragments of his former property, he began the world again.

The next meeting was on the 4th of May, the day specified in the charter for the choice of officers, when the same persons named at the preceding meeting were again chosen.

Henceforth the meetings of the Chamber went on in the usual course, and were occupied with the ordinary cases of the business of the city. At the August meeting the French Consul, Mr. St. John, informed the Chamber, by letter, that his M. C. M., for the encouragement of American commerce to China, had ordered that the ships and vessels of the United States should enjoy the privilege of putting into the Isles of France and Bourbon, where they will find every protection and liberty they may stand in need of.

The newly established Government of the United States stood greatly in need of revenue; and the State of New York, in order to contribute its proportion to the general fund, and for its own necessary expenditures, passed an import law—which, however, was too frequently violated by smugglers. The consideration of this matter was brought before the Chamber, on motion of Mr. James Beekman, and was referred to a committee, consisting of the Vice President Sears, Jacob Morris and James Beekman, who, at the subsequent meeting in October, 1784, reported the following resolution, which was unanimously concurred in, and ordered to be published in the newspapers.

Resolved, That the members of this Corporation do solemnly engage and promise reciprocally to each other, that they will, by every means in their power, be aiding and assisting to prevent the *scandalous practice of smuggling*, and will give information of every violation of the laws which may come to their knowledge, so that the offender may be publicly known and punished; and they do most earnestly request and recommend to their fellow-citizens that they unite with them in this so necessary and laudable engagement.

It may be said with entire truth, and with proud satisfaction, that this honorable testimony of the early merchants of New York against the scandalous practice of smuggling, has been practically borne out by their successors, even to this day, and that among no commercial people are the demoralizing habits of smuggling less encouraged, or more universally contemned, than among the merchants of this metropolis.

At the close of a long and bloody war, the States, struggling against depreciated paper currency at home, found themselves exposed, in their commerce on the high seas, and especially with Great Britain and her remaining colonies, to vexations and harassing depredations and regulations.

Accordingly, at the meeting in February, 1785, we find a Committee appointed to memorialize the State that it might represent to Congress "the depredations made on the navigation of the United States by the Algerines, and the restrictions laid on our trade by the British and other nations, and the unfavorable state of our commerce at large."

An address was also made by the Chamber to the Continental Congress, testifying the respect of the Chamber for that

body, and their confidence in its wisdom—expressing regret that "the present condition of the city, which, through the whole course of the late war, has been devoted to the rage of British power, in many respects, deprives its citizens of the means of gratifying their cordial wishes, which we can assure your honorable body are to render your residence among them convenient and agreeable." Going on to express their conviction that Congress would take all proper measures for the advancement of commerce, the address thus emphatically concludes: "Because, until our national flag be rendered respectable, and our public credit established, the inhabitants of the United States can but partially enjoy the great blessings of liberty and peace for which they have so successfully contended."

At the annual meeting on the first Tuesday (3d) of May, 1785, John Alsop addressed a letter to the Chamber, which is entered on the minutes, pleading a long and severe attack of the gout, as an explanation of his absence from the board, and that and his advancing years, as reasons for declining to be considered a candidate for re-election.

John Alsop, it will be seen, was chosen the first President after the restoration of New York to the American forces. He had been absent from the city during the whole British occupation. He was the first Vice President chosen at the last May meeting held in 1775, before the British rule in the city commenced. After that he never met with the Board till that rule had ended, and until the Legislature of New York, free and independent, had re-sanctioned the charter of the Chamber.

John Alsop could not, without being false to his blood, prove false to freedom. Born in this land, he sprang from a soldier of Cromwell's—in arms against oppression—Capt. Richard Alsop, who came to America to take possession of a considerable estate near Newtown, (L. I.,) left him by an uncle. He married into one of the Dutch families of Long Island, and he was the great-grandfather of the John Alsop of whom we are now speaking. His father, John, was born on Long Island, 1697,—was a lawyer of repute, and settled at New Windsor. He subsequently removed with his family to this city, and practiced law until his death in 1761. He was buried in Trinity church-yard, leaving two sons, John and Richard, both of whom

applied themselves to commerce. Richard, who was a clerk in the house of Philip Livingston, removed at an early age to Middletown, Conn., and died there in 1776. John remained in New York, and became a successful and opulent merchant. He was a man of large stature, fine presence, and great intelligence. His early political bias, and it never changed, was for his native country; yet he did not look without dread upon a forcible separation from the mother country. Submission to her unjust claims he never dreamed of, but he did hope and strive to bring about by peaceful means an adjustment of the controversy, which, while honorable to us, would be beneficial for the home government. He was high in the confidence of his fellow-citizens, and on the 25th of July, 1774, he was elected by them one of the delegates of the Congress to be held in Philadelphia.

He had illustrious colleagues, Philip Livingston, Isaac Low, James Duane, and John Jay.

Decisive as this step appeared, yet did not the Congress throw away the scabbard. The addresses they issued to the British nation, and yet more expressly that made to the King, spoke of loyal attachment, and of the hope and desire that all difficulties would be removed. Nor was the Congress or Legislature of the Province at all prepared for separation from the mother country. Opinion then, indeed, was not as far advanced as at the Philadelphia Congress, for when the President of the State Provincial Congress, the gallant Gen. Woodhull, moved that the thanks of the house be given to the Representatives of the Province for their services in the Continental Congress, the motion was lost, 9 ayes, 15 noes.

Mr. Alsop was now fairly launched in the public councils, and in 1776, he, with his associates in the Congress of 1774, (except Isaac Low,) was again sent to the Continental Congress, and at the same time they were chosen members of the Provincial Congress. The Provincial Congress, still halting between two opinions, had confined their instructions to their delegates in the Continental Congress to means of reconciliation with England. Up to this period very few persons in New York had thought seriously of independence. A hope still lingered and was cherished, that the ties of language, laws and lineage would be strong enough to hold together the two

countries, and that redress to America might be obtained without separation from England. The Provincial Congress, as we have seen, partook of this feeling, and at any rate did not look upon themselves as authorized to shake off allegiance to Great Britain, and change the form of government without the direct assent of the people. On the 27th May, 1776, therefore, a proposition was carried in that body—that in view of the present circumstances of the country, a convention be chosen by the people to decide upon the proper course to be adopted, and meanwhile that they, the Provincial Congress, would only exercise such powers as were clearly delegated to them. While the Provincial Congress was thus hesitating, the Continental Congress had already broached the subject of Independence, and on the 28th of June, 1776, the New York delegates wrote as follows to the Provincial Congress:

"Your delegates have expected that the question of Independence will very shortly be agitated in Congress. Some of us consider ourselves as bound by our instructions not to vote on that question, and all wish to have your sentiments thereon. The matter will admit of no delay. We have, therefore, sent an express, who will await your orders." This letter was read, as the journals state, with *closed doors*. The original instructions to their delegates empowered them only to consent to and determine on such measures as should be "effectual for the re-establishment and preservation of American rights and privileges, and the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the Colonies."—With such power, it is clear they could take no efficient part in the deliberations for Independence. John Jay and others of the delegates went home to ascertain the views of the people and Congress of New York—but still no new instructions were given to them, nor sent to the delegates who remained in Philadelphia.

Yet matters pressed. Sir Wm. Howe arrived at Sandy Hook on the 25th June, and three days afterward was joined by all the fleet and forces from Halifax. The Provincial Congress invested Gen. Washington with full power, and on the 30th retired themselves from New York to White Plains.

A second letter now came from the delegates in the Continental Congress, inclosing a draft of the Declaration of Independence reported on 28th June. On 2d July another letter

was despatched by the delegates, Mr. Livingston and Mr. Alsop—the other two, Mr. Jay and Mr. Duane, being in attendance on the Provincial Congress—stating their embarrassment for want of instructions. Every other colony but New York had given their delegates positive instructions to vote for independence, or left them free "to act according to their own judgment. As for themselves, their hands were tied; they could vote neither one way nor the other. What shall we do? —say they—retire, or remain?—and if remaining, shall we vote or not? Our situation is singular and delicate. We wait, then, your earliest advices and instructions, whether we are to consider our Colony bound by the vote of the majority in favor of Independence. Once possessed of your instructions we will use our best endeavor to follow them."

No new instructions were given, notwithstanding these urgent appeals, and of course the old instructions stood, and Independence was declared without the vote of New York. Mr. Jefferson, in his correspondence referring to this occurrence, says: "The delegates from New York declared they were for it themselves, and were assured their constituents were, but as they had no authority by their instructions, they thought themselves not justifiable in voting on either side, and asked leave to withdraw from the question, which was granted."

The President of Congress, John Hancock, in a letter dated 6th July, communicated to the Provincial Congress of New York a copy of the Declaration of Independence, adopted on the 4th. The house immediately, on the 9th July, went into consideration of it, and *unanimously* passed this resolution:

"That the reasons assigned by the Continental Congress for declaring the United Colonies free and independent, are cogent and conclusive; and that while we lament the cruel necessity which has rendered the measure unavoidable, we approve the same, and will, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, join with the other Colonies in supporting it—and that the delegates of this State in the Continental Congress be and they hereby are authorized to consult, and adopt all such measures as they may deem conducive to the happiness and welfare of the United States."

The sudden change of feeling indicated by the unanimous adoption of this resolution, from a state of hesitation, doubt and

inaction, to such a degree as to leave unanswered the urgent appeals of their delegates for instructions, may be explained in part, possibly, by the consideration that the step was taken irrevocably by the Continental Congress, and that there was no longer room, therefore, for deliberation or dissent.* However that may be, John Alsop felt himself slighted by the course of the Provincial Congress, and in a letter to that body, dated Philadelphia, 16th July, he thus gives vent to his feelings:

"GENTLEMEN: Yesterday our President read in Congress a resolve of your honorable body, on the 9th instant, in which you declare New York a free and independent State. I cannot help saying I am much surprised to find it coming through this

* This seeming inconsistency is explained in the following extract, which shows that the body which declared New York an independent State, was a different one from that which hesitated to give instructions to their delegates in Congress.

Extract from the Life of General Nathaniel Woodhull, in Knapp's American Biography, page 375.

"On the 28th August, 1775, General Woodhull was elected President of the Provincial Congress, and held the same office in the body that succeeded it in 1776. Doubting its powers to conform to the recommendation of the Continental Congress, by erecting a new form of government to the exclusion of all foreign control, the Provincial Congress, on the 31st May, 1776, recommended to the electors of the several counties, to vest the necessary power either in their present members, or in others to be chosen in their stead. The British army having, on the 30th June, appeared off the harbor of New York, the Provincial Congress, on its adjournment that day, directed that the Congress in which the new powers were vested, and which was to assemble on the 8th July, should meet at White Plains. They did not in fact assemble until the 9th July, 1776, when Gen. Woodhull was chosen President.

"The Declaration of Independence, passed on the 4th instant, had not received the unanimous approbation of the Colonies in the Continental Congress, the delegates from the Colony of New York having declined to vote, because, although they were personally for the measure, and believed their constituents to be so, they were fettered by instructions drawn nearly a twelvemonth before, when the hope of reconciliation was yet cherished. Immediately on their meeting, the new Provincial Congress unanimously adopted the Declaration, (Gen. Woodhull presiding,) on the part of the People of New York; thus filling the void occasioned by the want of the necessary powers in their delegates at Philadelphia. On the next day they assumed the title of '*the Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York*,' and subsequently formed the first Constitution of the State.

channel. The usual method hitherto practised, has been for the Convention of each Colony to give their delegates instructions to act and vote upon all and any important questions. And in the last letter we were favored with from your body, you told us you were not competent or authorised to give us instructions on the grand question; nor have you been pleased to answer our letter of 2d instant, otherwise than by your resolve transmitted to the President. I think we were entitled to an answer."

This is the expression of natural and manly indignation at an unmerited slight.

Mr. Alsop concluded this letter by declaring that it was against his judgment and inclination that the door of reconciliation with Great Britain should be closed, and therefore tendered his resignation as a delegate to the Continental Congress. This was accepted; and here terminates Mr. Alsop's political life.

The city of New York being now in possession of the British, with whom this country was at open war, Mr. Alsop hesitated not at all as to his course; for he was thoroughly a Whig, although not yet believing in the unavoidable separation of the two countries—but abandoning his property and large mercantile interests in New York, he withdrew to Middletown, Ct., where resided his brother Richard, and remained there until the evacuation of the city in 1783.

He was then chosen President of the Chamber of Commerce, as has been already stated, and resumed his mercantile operations, and was a large and fortunate underwriter, before the era of incorporated insurance companies.

Mr. Alsop lost his wife in 1773—leaving him with an only child, a daughter, who was married in the year 1787 to Rufus King, then a delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress, sitting in New York.

Mr. Alsop survived till 1795, when he died in the full possession of his faculties, though at a very advanced age, with a reputation unstained, and amid the general respect.

The following officers were chosen by the Chamber of Commerce at the May meeting in 1785—after Mr. Alsop's declining a re-election: John Broome, President; William Constable, 1st Vice President; Paschall A. Smith, 2d Vice President; Joshua Sands, Treasurer; Adam Gilchrist, Jr., Secretary.

A special meeting was held on Monday, the 16th May, to consider of a circular letter from Boston of 22d April, signed by JOHN HANCOCK and several other merchants, which enclosed Resolutions passed by the people of Boston in town meeting, on 16th April. The letter sets forth the alarming situation of our commercial intercourse with Great Britain, "the necessity of a commercial treaty between the two countries, as from want of such a treaty, and the foolish predilection of too many of our citizens for the manufactures of that nation, we are principally subjected to the inconveniences we now experience." The letter farther sets forth that by reason of the rigorous execution of her navigation acts, by the discouragements of all sorts thrown in the way of American exports, and of American navigation, no remittances other than in cash can be made for the merchandise imported, thus producing a general complaint of the want of a sufficient medium to answer the ordinary purposes of life. The only effectual remedy for this evil state of things, is, in the words of this letter, "the vesting Congress with full power to regulate the internal as well as external commerce of all the States," and it therefore calls upon the Chamber for an immediate application "to the State to vest such power in Congress (if they have not already done so) as shall be competent to the great and interesting purpose of placing the commerce of the United States upon a footing of perfect equality with every other nation:" and farther "to petition Congress (when they shall be vested with such authority) to make such internal regulations as shall have that happy effect to encourage attention to our manufactures, and remove the embarrassments under which trade at present labors." The Chamber of Commerce wisely deeming that this was a subject too large to be deliberated upon or decided by their single corporation, resolved to call a public meeting of all the citizens, at the City Hall, on Wednesday, 15th June, and requested the President of the Chamber to attend and explain the objects of the meeting.

No report from the President of the result of this public meeting, is entered upon the minutes, nor is there any farther allusion to it.

The minutes of 3d January, 1786, present the memorial of Christopher Collis to the Chamber, asking their aid to an enterprise he meditated, and which had received encouragement from

the Legislature—*no less than connecting the City by artificial navigation with the lakes*—the germ of the Erie Canal! The memorial runs thus:

"Your memorialist has formed a design of opening an intercourse with the interior parts of the United States, by an artificial inland navigation, along the Mohawk River and Wood Creek to the great lakes—a design which must evidently extend to the commerce of this city with exceeding rapidity beyond what it can possibly arrive at by any other means; a design which Providence has manifestly pointed out, and which, in the hands of a commercial people, must evidently tend to make them great and powerful; and which, though indefinite in its advantages, may be effected for a sum perfectly trifling when compared with the advantages."

The memorialist adds that he had applied to, and received encouragement from, the legislature—that he had examined the ground "at the Cohoes, the Little Falls, and Fort Schuyler," and found that no considerable difficulty existed; finally, that he had secured "a number of respectable gentlemen as subscribers," and asked for the countenance and subscription of the Chamber of Commerce. That body returned an answer to Mr. Collis, that they entertained the highest idea of the utility of his scheme, wished it all success, but that as a Coporation they had no funds.

This was in January, 1786, little more than two years after the evacuation of the city—and indicates, under the circumstances of prostration and discouragement in which the commerce, currency and resources of the country were at the close of the war, the remarkable spirit of enterprise and sagacious looking into the future, which forty years later had its full scope and fruition in the completion of the Erie Canal.

The Legislature, at its session in the beginning of the year 1786, having under discussion a scheme for issuing Paper Money, and *making it a legal tender*, the Chamber, on the 28th February, adopted a memorial setting forth the evils and immorality of such an issue, and caused copies thereof to be circulated for signatures all through the city. It is a most able memorial, setting forth, in the clearest light, the evils of such a course. A single extract is quoted to show the vigor of thought and of style in which the paper is written.

"Without attempting a discussion of the subject at large, your memorialists respectfully beg leave to submit a few remarks which to them appear unanswerable.

"1st—If the paper emitted should stand on such a basis as to render it in the public estimation equal to gold and silver, the intervention of legislative authority to enforce its reception, must be unnecessary. If it should not stand on such a basis, that intervention would be unjust and indefensible on any principle of morality or public utility.

"It would be by law to enable the debtor to defraud his creditor.

"It would be by law to give the property of one set of men to another.

"It would be by law to involve creditors in *ruin*, in order to save debtors from *distress*.

"It would be by law to undermine all the principles of private credit, private faith, and private honesty.

"If it were to be admitted in its fullest extent that many debtors will be ruined, what interest has the State in substituting one set of ruined men to another set of ruined men?"

The whole memorial is couched in like terse and forcible language, and seems to have excited quite a commotion in the legislature, for they refused to print it—and when it was up next day, and was read as part of the minutes, that portion of the minutes was ordered to be *obliterated*. The truth was too reproachful to be permitted to stand. As it may possibly interest some readers to know the exact course which this matter took in the legislature, I have thrown into a note, explanatory extracts from the journals of the legislature, kindly looked up for me by the Assistant Librarian of the Historical Society, Mr. Geo. H. Moore.*

* In the Assembly, Jan. 21, 1786. Mr. Paine moved for a Committee of one from each county to devise the best method for emitting a paper currency, and for considering and reporting means and measures for discharging the public debts.

Carried—and Committee app. (12) *Journal, p.* 15.

Committee reported on Feb. 4. Bill ordered, &c. &c., for emitting £200,000 in bills of credit of this State. Same Com. with the addition of two new members.

Bill reported and read Feb. 6.

At the Annual Meeting of May, '86, John Broome was re-elected President.

As exemplifying manners at this early day, it may be mentioned that in the minutes of the 30th June is this entry:

"The President produced a letter from Chas. Thomson, Secretary of Congress, informing the Chamber that there would be a public levee at the house of the President of Congress, from 12 to 2 o'clock on the 4th July."

The matter was referred to a Committee, and they reported, and the Board resolved that the Chamber of Commerce should meet and proceed as a distinct organization to the levee.

On the 13th February, '87, it was resolved that

"Such merchants, being citizens of this State, as were members of this corporation, antecedent to the confirmation of the charter by a law of the State of New York, passed 10th April, '84, shall be and hereby are admitted and declared to be members thereof—provided that they respectively attend the Chamber at a stated meeting, and signify their consent to be considered members on or before the first Tuesday in June next."

Feb. 7. Referred to Com. of the Whole House.

Progress reported Feb. 10. Feb. 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22. (Petitions received and referred to the Com.) 23.—(*Harper's* amendment making the bills a legal tender in payment of all debts and contracts, &c., rejected,) 25. (Same amendment reconsidered and negatived, and Mr. Schoonmaker moved the clause in the act No. LX. (see below,) which was adopted,) 28, March 1.

March 2d. A *Memorial of the Chamber of Commerce* was read. Reference moved to the Committee above and negatived. Motion to enter it on the Journal, voted down.

March 3d. Memorial being read as a part of the Minutes, ordered to be *obliterated.*

Memorial referred to a Committee of Five, Messrs. Boyd, Troup, Livingston, Havens, and Pell.

March 3d. Committee on the Bill having informed the House of their readiness to report, Mr. Gardner moved a postponement of consideration of the Bill till the Committee on the Memorial should report, which motion did not prevail. Mr. Gordon then moved to strike out the Section LX. (see below)—negatived. Mr. Trup then moved that the Bill be rejected—negatived.

Bill ordered to be engrossed.

March 4th. Mr. Gordon moved a resolution to order the Printer to the State to print in his paper the Memorial, &c.—not allowed.

This was a peace-offering to those who, having remained in the city during the British occupation, had, after the close of the war, been looked upon with averted eyes.

At the meeting in June, of this year, it was resolved that the members of the Chamber would dine together, on the 4th July, at Bradford's Coffee House—and that such other citizens as might choose, be invited to unite in the dinner. "Fifteen shillings for each," says the report recommending this patriotic dinner, "would, with economy, probably be adequate to the expenses of the entertainment." Prices as well as times and men have changed very considerably since then, and 40s. or $5, is now about the lowest mark for like festivals.

At the September meeting a revision of the By-Laws was discussed and adopted. Also regulations respecting damages on Bills of Exchange, commissions on Business, quality and weight

March 6th. Engrossed Bill read a third time and passed. Sent to Senate, &c.

Senate.—March 7th. Bill received from Assembly and ordered to a second reading.

March 8th. Committed to Committee of the Whole, and with it the Memorial and Petition of the Chamber of Commerce, and a Petition of 600 inhabitants of the city of New York, &c. &c.

Progress reported March 10, 13, 14. (Memorial of Merchants, &c.) 15, 16, 23, 28, 29, (question whether the money emitted should be a tender, decided in the negative, and *Section LX. amended*, &c. &c.) Sent to the Assembly for concurrence in amendments.

April 1st. Bill returned from Assembly—various amendments not concurred in, and the Senate receded from all but two, and on

April 6th. They came to an agreement, &c.

SESSION LAWS, 9TH SESSION.—1786.

An Act for emitting the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Pounds in bills of credit, for the purposes therein mentioned. Passed the 18th of April, 1786.

Sect. LVII. [Gold and silver and the bills emitted by this Act only to be received for duties by the Collector.]

Sect. LX. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the bills of credit to be emitted by virtue of this Act, shall be a legal tender in all cases when any suit is or shall be brought or commenced for any debt or damages, and the cost of suit, in any stage of the proceedings thereof—provided always, that nothing in this Act shall extend to contravene any treaty between the United States of America and any Foreign State or Power.

of Goods, &c. Among the By-Laws then adopted was one to the effect, that any member of the Corporation refusing to submit to the Arbitration Committee, or other members of the Chamber, any matters of account which they may be concerned in, *be expelled the Chamber*. A motion to reconsider this resolution was made by Gen. Malcolm, at the December meeting, and *lost*.

The Chamber occupied itself with all the subjects of interest to commerce, and occasionally went farther, as at the September meeting, 1788, they resolved,

"That the President, in behalf of the Chamber, wait upon his Worship the Mayor, to request that the Corporation would be pleased to fit up and repair the City Hall in such a manner as to make it convenient as possible for the reception of Congress, which is to meet in this city in March next."

At the next meeting in October an additional resolution was passed, which, after setting forth the great advantage to the city and state, that Congress should meet in New York, required the Chamber to make efforts with the Legislature for the passing of a law that the expenses incurred in providing for the accommodation of Congress be *a charge against the State*.

It has been noticed in a preceding part of this memoir, that in grateful remembrance of Lieut. Governor Colden's ready compliance with the request of the founders of the Association that he would grant to it an act of incorporation, a picture of the Lieut. Governor was painted for, and at the expense of the Chamber.

On the 1st February, 1790, Vice President Murray notified the Chamber that this picture, in good preservation, was in hands which were willing to restore it to its owners; whereupon the President was requested to write to the person indicated, and ask for its restoration. It was, accordingly, restored to the Chamber in May, 1793, by Cadwallader D. Colden, Esq., a son of the Lieut. Governor, and ordered to be framed.

The Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. P. M. Wetmore, whose zeal and intelligence in all he undertakes, are not less prized by this Society, of which he is an honored and most useful member, than by the Chamber of Commerce—at my request furnished the curious information concerning this picture, and other objects valuable to the Chamber, embraced in the annexed letter:

NEW YORK, November 20, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR: In reply to your note asking for any information of interest relating to the Chamber of Commerce, I will state, as briefly as possible, one or two incidents which may be deemed worthy of notice in your proposed discourse.

When I entered upon the discharge of my duties as Secretary of the Chamber, in 1843, I received a single volume of minutes of its proceedings, and could not learn, on inquiry of my predecessors, that any previous volumes were extant. Possessing something of an antiquarian disposition, I was not content to believe that the history of so ancient an incorporation could be thus imperfect. After diligent inquiry, and tracing the affairs back through a number of years, I was so fortunate as to find, in a lumber box at a store in Front-street, the two volumes of early records now in your possession. They form a complete series from the organization of the institution, in 1768, to the present time. A short hiatus occurs at the close of the Revolution, and it is probable that no sessions of the Chamber were held during that period.

While occupied in my search for the missing records, I accidentally learned that in the garret of a store in Coffee House Slip—(I am quite sure you will sanction the use of that old, familiar designation, rather than the more modern one of Wall street,) were to be found two large frames, supposed to be the property of the Chamber. Upon removing the canvass covering and the coat of mildew and dust within, I had the great satisfaction of discovering two fine historical portraits. The injuries resulting from long exposure and a few accidents were soon repaired, and these fine pictures now occupy prominent positions in the gallery of the Historical Society, where they were deposited for safe custody by authority of the Chamber.

The portrait of Lieut. Governor Cadwallader Colden, the Executive officer of the Colony of New York at the period of the incorporation of the Chamber, is by an artist of the name of Pine, whose history is unknown to me. The other is unquestionably the best full length portrait extant of Alexander Hamilton. It is a production of great merit, and bears evidence of being from the hand of Trumbull, and yet no mention is made of it in Dunlap's work. If it be Trumbull's it is certainly one of his best portraits. I have not been able to find any allusion to it in the minutes.

These pictures are remembered as having been conspicuous ornaments of the room occupied by the Chamber in the old Merchants' Exchange, and were saved from the flames when that building was destroyed, in the great conflagration on the morning of December 16th, 1835. Whenever the merchants of New York shall evince enough of public spirit to provide a suitable building for the accommodation of the Chamber, and thus secure a local habitation for so ancient and honorable an association, the custody of these fine paintings will doubtless be resumed. They should be regarded as the beginning, only, of a gallery of portraits illustrating our history as a commercial people.

The seal of the Chamber, which I send you with this, is an interesting memorial of past times. It is of massive silver, about three inches in diameter, and was made in London. It bears date 1770, the year of the Society's incorporation.

A somewhat curious story attaches to this seal. Some years after the Revolution, a gentleman interested in the affairs of this country, in looking through a sort of curiosity shop in London, where a miscellaneous collection of personal effects was displayed to catch the eye of a purchaser, fortunately discovered this signet of the Chamber of Commerce of New York. He immediately secured the valuable estray, and with commendable patriotism restored it to the proper custody. I regret that I am unable to give you his name. If access could be had to the papers of the late John Pintard, for many years Secretary of the Chamber, and a thorough antiquarian in feeling and practice, many authentic and interesting details relating to this and other incidents belonging to your subject, would doubtless be found. It was the habitual occupation of Mr. Pintard to record everything of this nature, and his diary must be rich in historical details.

If I mistake not, Anthony Van Dam, who was the first secretary of the Chamber, and continued to hold the office until the close of the Revolution, went to England among the royalists expatriated at that period. He became, I believe, an agent of the underwriters at Lloyd's. Is it not fair to suppose that through some inadvertency of his, as he was the legal custodier of the article, our seal found its way to London, and after his death, into the hands of the dealer in second-hand wares? There was a tablet to the memory of Van Dam erected in one of our city churches, (St. Paul's, I think,) by Mr. Pintard.

In my search for objects of interest connected with the past history of the Chamber, my attention was naturally directed to the original charter, granted by Lieut. Gov Colden, in the name of His Majesty George III., and which I knew had been in existence some few years previously. Every effort in my power was made at the time, and has been continued since, but as yet without success, for the recovery of this interesting link in our historical chain.

There is a bit of history, also, connected with this old charter. Some five-and-twenty years ago, Admiral Walton, of the British Navy, succeeded by inheritance to the property of his family in this city; and on taking possession, among a vast accumulation of miscellaneous lumber, boxes, baskets and chests, articles of domestic economy, dragoon saddles and Hessian muskets, in the spacious attic of "Walton House," in Pearl street, was found the original charter of the Chamber of Commerce. It was very large, about three feet in width, with the massive waxen seal of the crown, six inches in diameter, attached, and the whole carefully encased in tin and enclosed in mahogany. The Admiral immediately made known the discovery to Mr. Pintard, who took possession of the document.

Secretary Van Dam was known to have been an intimate friend, probably a relative, of the Walton family. William Walton had once been

President of the Chamber. These facts may account for the situation in which the charter had been found, and we must therefore believe that this instrument had lain undisturbed in the recesses of Walton House for the period of nearly half a century.

On the night of the great fire, the mahogany case containing the charter, was seen in the room occupied by the Chamber at the Exchange. As everything portable was supposed to have been removed from the building before its destruction, I indulged for some time a confident hope of being able to recover the old charter. In this, I regret to say, I have been disappointed. If it was saved from the fire, it has ever since been so carefully guarded that the most diligent research has not been successful in tracing its whereabout. Like the old seal, it may yet turn up in some unexpected manner, and then our memorials of an existence of fourscore years will be complete.

I am persuaded that you have found the subject in your hands one of deep interest, and I rejoice that the rise and progress of our commerce, the intelligence, enterprise, integrity and patriotism of those who have given name and character to our community, are hereafter to be matters of history, and not merely of tradition.

I wish you may be able to infuse into the great body of our merchants something of that true *esprit du corps* which has so often given power, and influence, and honor to commercial communities in other countries.

Why should not measures be taken for an annual commemoration of the founding of our institution, and thus assurance be given to those who come after us, that civil conquests, won by the zeal and enterprise of former generations, will not be suffered to pass away unnoticed and unrecorded? I am, dear Sir,

With true respect and regard, yours,

PROSPER M. WETMORE.

CHARLES KING, Esq., &c. &c., New York.

The Pilots of New York seem, at this early day, to have given trouble and dissatisfaction, for at the meeting in December, 1791, a committee was appointed to inquire into the present regulations and conduct of the pilots belonging to this port. At the next meeting this committee reported, and the Chamber, accepting their report, resolved that, "the President be requested to forward it to the members of Congress who represent this State, soliciting their influence to have the spirit thereof introduced into any law which may be brought forward for the general regulation of pilots."

This is interesting at this time, as bearing upon a question now agitated with apparent seriousness—as to the *constitutional* right of Congress to regulate pilotage.

Here is a contemporaneous exposition of that right, within two years after the adoption of the constitution, and an appeal to it from New York, in order to remedy the evils of pilots under the State.

In May, 1793, the hour of meeting of the Chamber was changed from 6 to 7 P. M. on the first Tuesday of each month, and the fines for non-attendance were abolished.

At a special meeting on the 24th July, 1793, a committee was appointed to procure subscriptions in aid of the fugitives from St. Domingo, who, flying from that island in consequence of the disasters and horrors of the servile war, had arrived, and were arriving in the United States. At the August meeting resolutions were adopted by the Chamber, and ordered to be published, in favor of the duty of preserving neutrality in the war then going on.

At the May meeting in '94, the annual election coming on, there was a tie vote for President, 17 each, for John Broome, who had been annually re-elected from 1785, and Gulian Verplanck. On a second ballot Mr. Verplanck was elected. He shortly afterward appeared in the Chamber, and, thanking his associates for the honor, declined the office. Mr. Broome, in like manner, acknowledging the obligations conferred upon him by previous repeated elections, declined being a candidate again, and then Mr. Comfort Sands, first Vice President, was elected. A unanimous vote of thanks to Mr. Broome was passed, "for his peculiar and unremitted attention to the business of the Chamber during his long administration as President."

It may be surmised that the bitterness of party strife, which, at the period in question was running very high, and when the French revolutionary tunes of *Ca ira* and *Carmagnole* were the occasions of almost as much passion and prejudice in our streets and houses, and homes, as in France—led to the contest between Messrs. Broome and Verplanck, or rather between the friends of these gentlemen, for each of them evinced perfect self-respect and self-denial on the occasion.

John Broome, the seventh President of the Chamber, and who was annually re-elected from '85 to '94—was of English parentage but American birth. His mother was of the old Huguenot family of *Latourette*.

He studied law with Gov. Livingston of New Jersey, but was induced by an elder brother, Samuel Broome, to renounce the Bar for Commerce, and accordingly he went into partnership with that brother as an English importer, before the revolution. After a time, however, he carried on business on his own account, and acquired both wealth and reputation as a merchant.

Before the commencement of the war, Mr. Broome married a Lloyd, of Lloyd's Neck. He was a zealous whig during the Revolution, and stood manfully by his country through all the trying scenes of that trying war. In 1775, he was a member of the Committee of Safety, and in '76 was a member of the Provincial Congress, which was forced to remove from the city by the inroads of the British forces.

He abandoned, as did so many other whig merchants, their business and residence in New York, while it remained in the British occupation, and removing to Connecticut, devoted his means and energy to fitting out privateers against British commerce.

With the return of peace he resumed his residence in New York, and it is a proud tribute to his honored name to state, that he was among those citizens who, after the close of hostilities, paid in full, principal and interest, the debts he contracted in England before the war, and which too many considered abrogated or outlawed by that war.

Mr. Broome was for several years an Alderman of the city; in 1784 he was appointed City Treasurer; and in the same year he became President of the Chamber of Commerce. He was also President of the New York Insurance Company, the first institution of the kind incorporated by the State. Mr. Broome espoused the anti-federal side in politics, and was chosen in 1800 a member of the Assembly from this city, and with his colleagues, General Gates, Henry Rutgers and George Clinton, contributed to the election to the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson. In 1801 he was appointed one of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy, under the Act of 1798—and in 1804 he was elected Lieutenant Governor—Morgan Lewis being the Governor. Mr. Broome was re-chosen successively for six years, but died before the expiration of his term, in August, 1810, in the 72d year of his age.

Mr. Broome's life, career and character are among those which the Chamber of Commerce may refer to with pride, as of one belonging for many years to their honored association.

Comfort Sands, who succeeded Mr. Broome in the Presidency, and held that station for four years, from '94 to '98, was a native of Long Island, and born at Cow Neck, in February, 1748. He entered early into a counting house, and as soon as of age, commenced business for himself—just one year after the first institution of the Chamber. He had already acquired considerable fortune when the war of the Revolution broke out. He was a sterling whig, and embraced the cause of his native land with zeal and courage. He renounced his residence in New York, was a member of the Provincial Congress in '75 and '76, and in the latter year was one of the Committee of Safety.

While the Congress were at White Plains in '76, Mr. Sands was, after the Declaration of Independence, appointed on the 24th July, Auditor General of the State of New York, and he continued in that office until 1781, when other avocations induced him to resign it. Mr. Sands then became a contractor for the supply of provisions for the American army, and in 1783, at the peace, entered into business with his brother Joshua, and for several years pursued his business as a leading merchant. He was repeatedly sent to the Assembly from the city—was a Director of the Bank of New York—and was everywhere regarded as an intelligent and opulent merchant.

Reverses, such as the most prudent cannot always escape, overtook him—and the remainder of his life was passed in retirement. He breathed his last at Hoboken, in September, 1834, at the good old age of nearly 87 years.

On the 9th of May, '94—with the laudable solicitude for peace, of which enlightened commercial men are always the advocates—of peace with honor—the Chamber unanimously adopted resolutions on occasion of the appointment by Washington of John Jay as Minister to England. We quote only one:

"*Resolved*, That if, nevertheless, this embassy should fail to preserve to us the blessings of Peace, yet we persuade ourselves it connot fail to convince all nations of our justice and moderation, to unite our own sentiments and efforts, and render an appeal to arms more honorable to us and more formidable to our enemies."

This is the language of genuine patriotism and wise statesmanship, and must, when published, as it was ordered to be, have produced a great impression.

The political preference of the Chamber, however, was plainly indicated by the resolution adopted on the 2d of January, '95, that the Chamber will pay for the gunpowder expended in celebrating the election of John Jay as Governor of the State, to which high office he was chosen by the people while on his voyage home from his successful embassy to Great Britain.

A special meeting of the Chamber, on the 21st of July, '95, was convened to consider the subject "which particularly agitated the public mind, the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, between the United States and Great Britain." The Minutes say, "this meeting was the most respectable ever held in the Chamber of Commerce, (upwards of seventy members being present.) After the treaty was read, resolutions approving thereof were adopted with only *ten* dissenting voices." Neither the Resolutions, however, nor the yeas and nays are given.

The next entry is a sad one.

No business was transacted except the appointment of monthly committees, in August, September, October and November, owing to the prevalence of the dangerous fever. About 700 persons, mostly foreigners, died during that period.

At a special meeting in April, '96, a bill for the protection of American Seamen, then before the Senate of the United States, referred for the opinion of the Chamber—drawn by Rufus King, one of the Senators in Congress from New York—was unanimously approved, and directed to be returned, with that vote, to Mr. King.

A proposal for an accurate general survey of the sea-coasts of the United States, was at the same meeting transmitted to Edward Livingston, a representative in Congress from New York, in order to be laid before the House of Representatives.

In March, '98, the Chamber petitioned Congress to fortify the Harbor, in view of the critical state of our foreign affairs, and they deputed Col. Ebenezer Stevens, a member of the Chamber, to proceed to Philadelphia for the purpose of giving the necessary information to Congress respecting the fortifications of the city and port. A memorial to a like effect was also addressed to the Legislature.

Col. Stevens, at the next meeting, reported in writing the result of his mission, which had so far succeeded as to induce a committee of Congress to recommend an appropriation of $117,000 for fortifying the harbor; but Col. Stevens expressed doubts whether Congress would act upon this recommendation.

The difficulties between the United States and the French Republic were becoming daily more and more menacing, and accordingly the Chamber unanimously adopted, in August, '98, the report of a committee approving the neutral policy adopted by Washington, at the commencement of hostilities in Europe, and the repeated overtures made by the then President, John Adams, for an amicable adjustment of our misunderstanding with France. That report concluded with this resolution.

"But, estimating our rights as an independent nation far above any considerations of inconvenience, which may attend the means of maintaining and preserving them,

"*Resolved*, That we will zealously support such measures as the wisdom of the Government may dictate, and demonstrate by our unanimity, that all efforts to divide us will be vain."

About forty members were present at this meeting. The resolutions were forwarded to the President of the United States, who returned an immediate answer, a copy of which is spread on the minutes, expressing his satisfaction with this proceeding of the Chamber.

At the annual meeting in May, '98, John Murray was chosen President.

From the month of August until the month of December, no meeting of the Chamber was held, by reason of the prevalence of the yellow fever, which made its appearance about the 28th of August. The transactions of the Chamber for the next year, were few and unimportant; the meetings frequently failing for want of a quorum. In 1799 the yellow fever again prevailed, and from July to December there was no meeting of the Chamber.

A special meeting of the Chamber was convened on the 26th of December, '99, to consider of some appropriate mode of testifying regret for the irreparable loss sustained by the nation in the death of George Washington; and Archibald Gracie, Wm. Bayard and Jonathan H. Lawrence, were named as a committee on behalf of the Chamber, to confer with other

committees appointed by citizens, and with full power to make all necessary arrangements.

The year 1800 was a very blank year, according to these Records—few meetings were held, and little done at them, and during five months, from June to October, both inclusive, no meeting at all was held.

The February meeting, 1801, records long complaints about various schemes for amending the Inspection Laws, especially of Pot and Pearl Ashes. There was also renewed complaint about the pilots, and a committee was appointed to inquire what alterations were requisite in the regulations for the pilot service.

The year 1801 was hardly less barren than its precursor, no quorum having been formed after June until Feb., 1802, when a memorial was unanimously adopted by the Chamber against the repeal of the Judiciary Act, (the act known in the partisan jargon of the day as the act creating Midnight Judges.) The memorial was ordered to be sent to the President, and a copy, through Dr. Mitchell, representative in Congress from the city, to the House of Representatives. No meeting was again had till May, when the officers were to be chosen. John Murray was re-elected for the fifth time in succession.

The pilots were again complained of for neglect of duty, and a formal report against them was made at the June meeting, and, by order of the Chamber, handed to the wardens of the port, with a request that they would remedy the evils.

No meeting again till December, when a committee was again appointed to devise a more punctual attendance of the members.

At the commencement of 1803, Congress had under discussion a bill for repealing all discriminating duties on foreign ships, and on merchandise imported therein. The Chamber took the alarm, appointed a committee to prepare a remonstrance against a measure so fraught with evil to our rising navigation, and adopted, *unanimously*, the memorial, which sets forth, in facts and logic irresistible, the impolicy and mischief of the proposed repeal. During the residue of this year there were few or no meetings. Indeed it seemed the established custom, since the fever of '98, to intermit all meetings of the Chamber during the summer months.

On the 7th of February, 1804, a quorum was formed, and measures were taken to act in concert with the city Corporation and Health Officer, to devise a Quarantine system, to be submitted for the sanction of the Legislature.

A whole year elapsed without another meeting of the Chamber. On the 29th of February, 1805, a special meeting was had, of which the pilots again furnished one of the motives; and a committee was appointed to devise measures for remedying the complaints. It was also resolved to give a public dinner to Capt. Preble, just then returned from his gallant exploits before Tripoli, for which he received a gold medal and the thanks of Congress.

A meeting in May, 1806, was held for the choice of officers, when, on the declining of Mr. Murray, Cornelius Ray was chosen President. Mr. John Murray was a native of Pennsylvania, of Scotch descent. Early in life, (in the year 1758,) he became a citizen of the State of New York, and so continued until his death. His pursuits were exclusively commercial, and successively he conducted the concerns of Mr. John Murray, Murray, Sanson & Co., Murray & Sanson, and John Murray, through a period of nearly fifty years, and with good success, in an extensive importing and commission business. He was remarked for prudence and discretion, as far as possible removed from hazardous speculation, though possessed of ample means. He claimed and supported a character unimpeached and unimpeachable, and enjoyed the confidence and consideration of the mercantile community. He was well experienced in the customs of merchants, and though without a professional education, he was so well versed in the law of Marine Insurance, as connected with the customs of merchants, that his opinions were highly appreciated, as was manifested by public confidence in his decision as arbitrator on Insurance cases, which occupied a considerable portion of his time. He had no ambition for political advancement, which he might have attained if he had yielded to the solicitations of his friends. He served as Governor and Treasurer of the New York Hospital, almost from the first foundation of that Institution. He was Director in the Branch of the United States Bank in this city. He was a worthy member of the Presbyterian Church, and died in 1808, leaving a reputation without reproach.

The Chamber of Commerce now became virtually extinct, for a period of *eleven years*. A growing indifference, for several years previous to the year 1806, had been manifested by the members of the Chamber, to the dignity and usefulness of the association—so that its ceasing to live, as it were, for a term of years, is less inexplicable than otherwise it might be deemed.

On Tuesday, 4th of March, 1817, under a summons from Cornelius Ray, the President elected in 1806, issued at the request of several members, the Chamber was again organised—appointed a committee to revise its by-laws, and renewed signs of vitality were exhibited by the proposal of thirty-six new names, mostly of young merchants, come upon the scene since the last preceding meeting, as members of the Chamber.

The meetings were reduced to six per year, and were attended with some regularity. At the meeting in April, the portraits of Lt. Gov. Colden and of Alexander Hamilton, taken for and belonging to the Chamber, were, at the request of the Academy of Fine Arts, deposited with them, subject to the order of the Chamber.

At a special meeting in February, 1819, a memorial was adopted, to both Houses of Congress, against the proposed repeal of the charter of the Bank of the United States. This memorial argues the question wholly on large general grounds —and it says expressly: "Your memorialists are not induced to this respectful expression of their sentiments by apprehension of loss to the citizens of New York from a reduced value of the stock, for very little of it is held by them; nor by pride of opinion, for they have had no control over, neither do they approve the general administration of the affairs of that Institution." The committee who prepared and reported this memorial were Wm. Neilson, Geo. Griswold and J. I. Palmer.

Cornelius Ray having declined a re-election, William Bayard, first Vice President, was chosen President. The thanks of the Corporation were returned to Mr. Ray for his long and faithful services.

Cornelius Ray was of an old New York family, of which the founder, John Ray, came to this country before 1700, from Exeter, in the county of Devonshire, England. His son, Richard Ray, in 1705, was married to Elsey Saunders, and their son Richard, the father of Cornelius, was born in New York on the

12th of June, 1717, and on the 24th of April, 1748, he married Sarah, the daughter of Cornelius Bogert.

From this marriage sprang Cornelius Ray, who was born in New York on the 25th of April, 1755. He married in Albany, in July, 1784, Elizabeth, daughter of Peter Edward Elmendorff, of Kingston, Ulster county.

Previously thereto, however, Mr. Ray had made a visit to Europe.

Mr. Ray was an active merchant of New York, but during the Revolutionary war he retired to Albany. When peace had restored the city of New York to its own people, Mr. Ray returned to his accustomed place and pursuits. After the establishment of the United States Bank, Mr. Ray was chosen President of the branch in this city, and so continued until the expiration of its charter, in 1810. He was also, as has been seen, the President of the Chamber of Commerce from 1806 to 1819, when he declined farther service. Mr. Ray was long connected with several of the charitable institutions of his native city. In his personal character and intercourse he was kind and gentle, of high and well settled principles. He was the companion and friend of many of the distinguished men of the day. In politics he was a constant and sturdy supporter of the federal party. He was an honest man, a kind father, warm friend, and a sincere Christian, and he left behind him at his death, which occurred in 1820, an unblemished name, which his children honorably prize.

At a subsequent meeting in September, delegates were appointed, on the suggestion of the Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia, to meet in that city with delegates from all the commercial cities, to take measures to defeat the proposed Tariff Bill.

Such a convention did accordingly assemble in Philadelphia, on the 1st of November, and a report of the doings thereof was made by the New York delegates to the Chamber, at a special meeting in January, 1821. This report, which is spread at large on the minutes, embodies the names of all the members of that convention, and a journal of its proceedings, and the resolutions which were adopted by it. These resolutions, fourteen in number, are as thoroughly anti-tariff as even South Carolina could desire; yet no State south of Maryland was represented

—the convention consisting wholly of delegates from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Wm. Bayard, President of the New York Chamber of Commerce, and one of its delegates, was chosen President of the convention. Revenue, it was insisted by these resolutions, is the legitimate purpose of legislation on the subject of duties; and the abolition of drawbacks and the imposition of cash duties were alike resisted as injurious to commerce, manufactures and agriculture.

The first step toward building a Merchants' Exchange was taken at the May meeting of this year, when a committee was appointed to consider the expediency of such an enterprise. At a subsequent meeting the committee reported that they had petitioned the Legislature for an act of incorporation, with a capital of *half a million* dollars, to build an Exchange.

This act was granted, and under it subscriptions were obtained for building the Exchange, which was destroyed in the great fire of 1835.

The Chamber, in December, at a special meeting convened for the purpose of considering a circular letter from the merchants and citizens of Boston, asking the simultaneous cooperation of the commercial towns and cities, in an application to Congress to pass a *Bankrupt* law, resolved so to co-operate, and appointed a committee to draft a fitting memorial, which was reported to a subsequent meeting and adopted.

In January, 1822, the Chamber discussed and adopted resolutions, which were ordered to be sent to Congress, against the repeal of the laws prohibiting trade in British vessels from the colonies, while the colonial system of Great Britain was maintained against our navigation. This was a noted subject of dispute in its day, and the ground here taken by the Chamber was clearly that called for by a just sense of American rights—although that ground was, at a subsequent day, abandoned by the Government of the United States.

In the summer of this year (1822) the *yellow fever* again visited New York, and no meetings of the Chamber were held from the 2d of July to the 3d of December.

Early in the ensuing year the subject of the quarantine laws, the revision of the tariff of 1818, and the Mercantile Library Association, the inspection of flour, and other inspection laws, were under the consideration of the Chamber.

At the February meeting an elaborate report was accepted, setting forth the merits of the Mercantile Library Association, commending it to the special regard and protection of the Chamber, and recommending an appropriation of $250 to its library. This was granted, and a standing committee of five members of the Chamber was to be annually appointed, to visit the library from time to time, and to report its condition and that of the Association to the Chamber.

Alarm was created in this city at this juncture, by a proposition before the Legislature for confining the sittings of the Supreme Court altogether to Albany, and consequently depriving this city of the term usually held here, at which, cases involving nice points of mercantile law, were pleaded by men, whose residence and business here necessarily made them conversant with the laws and the usages of merchants. A strong memorial against this innovation was adopted, and the measure fell through.

An able memorial was also adopted 17th February, 1823, against a proposal of the Common Council, to assess taxes on all property either owned in the city or brought into it for sale —a project which, in the language of the memorial, "contemplated nothing less than that every firkin of butter, every basket of eggs, all meats, poultries, fish, vegetables, all articles of fuel, of clothing, of amusement, of luxury, of necessity, the fruits of the soil and produce of the seas, brought from our confederate States, equally with the manufactures and productions of foreign countries, shall each and all pay toll to the corporation of New York, for the privilege of being introduced into the city for the consumption, use and benefit of its inhabitants."

A very strong memorial to the Legislature was adopted at the February meeting, 1823, *against* the law for inspecting *tobacco*, as wholly injurious and of questionable constitutionality.

In the minutes of December, 1823, is a long report as to the law of factors and consignees, and their right to pledge goods, &c., together with the opinion of Chancellor Kent on the points applicable to this subject, which were submitted to him.

Again did the Chamber petition Congress for a bankrupt law, which the commercial disasters of 1823 rendered so necessary, but still petitioned in vain.

The quarantine law and the pilots were still sources of discontent, trouble and remonstrance.

During the summer of this year, 1826, the Chamber hardly met at all, but at the meeting in November, Robert Lenox, first Vice President, informed the Chamber that their President, William Bayard, who had been annually re-elected from 1820, had died on the 8th September preceding. A committee was immediately named to report suitable resolutions expressive of the respect and affection of the members for the deceased, and being reported, these resolutions were unanimously passed; and at the next meeting—held for the purpose of filling the vacancy—Robert Lenox, first Vice President, was chosen unanimously.

William Bayard descended from a Huguenot family of honorable antecedents and honorable conduct, was the son of Col. Bayard, who, trusted by the Crown at the commencement of our revolutionary struggle, returned that trust with unhesitating loyalty—and taking boldly the part of the Crown, subjected his large estates to confiscation. But he was not thereby exasperated against his countrymen—on the contrary, while this city was in possession of the British, he was active and liberal in relieving American prisoners, and obtained the release of many from that scene of torture and death, the Jersey, prison ship.

Colonel Bayard accompanied the retiring army to England, leaving behind his son William, the subject of this notice—who soon, by his activity, his industry and his good conduct, made for himself a name and a career, as an honorable and successful merchant. Forming a partnership, first with Herman Le Roy, and then with James McEvers, the house of *Le Roy, Bayard & McEvers* became, and for long years remained, one of the most honored and prosperous of American commercial establishments—they enjoyed, especially, the confidence of the wary and cautious, but opulent Dutch houses, which, in the hour of this nation's greatest need, after the revolutionary struggle, and before yet a settled federal government had consolidated the great resources of the country and obtained the control of them—had made large loans to the young Republic. The credit of the house of Le Roy, Bayard & McEvers, was world-wide—and it is believed that their bills of exchange drawn on England, were first used from this city, as a remittance to the East Indies instead of coin, for the purchase of India goods.

Their opulence and credit were at the highest when the project of the Erie Canal first took something like definite shape, and it is to be recorded to the credit of Mr. Bayard's sagacity, that he saw with the eyes and large soul of his early friend De Witt Clinton, the inestimable benefits of the enterprise, and pledged himself to Mr. Clinton, to procure from his Dutch friends the capital necessary for the undertaking, upon the stock of the State of New York.

A record lies before us, written by one who then was in the employment of the firm, and now a respected merchant in this city, which relates the particulars of an interview between Mr. Bayard and Mr. Clinton on this subject, at the counting-house of the former, and testifies both to the earnestness of Mr. Bayard's zeal in behalf of the great projects and to the delicacy of its real, unfaltering, undiscouraged author and accomplisher, De Witt Clinton. He objected to any arrangement which, because of the known intimacy and friendship between himself and Mr. Bayard, might lead to the possible imputation that they were co-operating in such a work for purposes of personal speculation. The overture was therefore declined—but it is not to be doubted that the confidence expressed by a man so conversant with the state of credit and the money market as Mr. Bayard, that capital adequate to the occasion could be had on the bonds of the State, had a most encouraging influence upon the mind of Mr. Clinton, and led him to persevere unto final and most triumphant success.

In this success no one more heartily rejoiced—than Mr. Bayard.

In all public works and institutions of benevolence, Mr. Bayard was ever ready. His private bounties were numerous, magnificent, and silent. His personal demeanor was most courteous—his manners winning, his temper gentle and sweet. He had no enemies, and hosts of friends—and when finally summoned from among the living, he was mourned as those only are mourned who have learned and practised the great but rare lesson in life, of so using prosperous fortunes as to disarm malice and silence envy.

At the March meeting in 1827, a remonstrance was adopted against a bill before the Legislature, proposing to change the rate of damages on protested bills on Europe, from 20 per cent.,

the established rate, to 7 per cent. As a matter of fact, it may be stated that the bill finally passed, fixing the damages at 10 per cent.

On the 1st May, 1827, the new Exchange, in Wall street, being opened for business, the Chamber of Commerce, on that day, took possession of the apartment assigned for their use by the trustees of the building.

On the 3d of July, 1827, the Chamber, on the suggestion of, and co-operating with, the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, adopted a memorial to the President, John Q. Adams, in favor of a line of communication between the United States and the Pacific Ocean, through the Gulf of Mexico, and across the Isthmus of Darien.

Thus, twenty-one years ago, was suggested the route which, within the last few weeks,—days, it may almost be said—has been carried into actual operation, for communicating with the Pacific Ocean. At that time no vision of American States on that great sea—of a continuous people from the Atlantic to the Pacific, stretching across the whole continent, of the same language, lineage and laws—had dawned on the popular mind. The communication then sought was simply for commercial convenience; but now it is of high social and political necessity that we should have the most rapid means of communicating with our own countrymen in California and in Oregon; and hence the line of steamers from New York to Chagres—of which the first will take her departure next week—and of a connecting line on the Pacific, of which the first, the *California*, went hence about a month ago.

The plan suggested to the government by the Chamber, in 1827, was for a line of small national vessels to sail once a month to Chagres, with a number of like vessels in the Pacific to meet their mails at Panama, and convey them to Valparaiso, touching at intermediate ports.

In September, 1827, was adopted a memorial to the Common Council, urging their co-operation with a plan proposed by the gentlemen of the bar, for constituting a new court in the city, to be known as the Superior Court, in order to remedy the great delay in the law, now so pernicious, arising from the excess of cases, and the insufficient provision of courts to determine them.

In January, 1828, another very earnest and forcible remonstrance to Congress, against the farther increase proposed, of duties on woolens, was adopted, and in the next month commendation is officially bestowed on a report by a committee of the citizens of Boston, as to the farther increase of the tariff, and thanks were voted to such newspapers as had reproduced extracts from that report.

A special meeting was convened by the President on the 18th of February, in order to consider of the proper means of testifying respect for the memory of De Witt Clinton, who died at Albany on the 11th of February, in the 59th year of his age. Appropriate resolutions were reported by W. W. Woolsey, and unanimously adopted. The chief one is here quoted, as comprehending in a brief summary the outline of an illustrious life:

"His devotion to the cause of science and literature, and to the benevolent institutions which distinguish the present day—his successful efforts to promote schools among the great body of our citizens, whereby nearly half a million of our youth receive the benefit of education—his genius in projecting, and his untiring zeal and energy in carrying into effect, the great scheme of internal navigation, which has already united the Hudson with the inland seas of the North, and will soon lead to a similar union with the immense waters of the West, and lay open to the commerce of this city fertile countries, whose shores are not inferior in extent to the shores of Europe—all show the superiority of his mind—that it was directed to the most patriotic objects, and that its efforts have been crowned with the most splendid success."

The public man of whom these things could be justly said, as in the case of De Witt Clinton they most unquestionably were, needs, can indeed have, no higher eulogy—no more glorious epitaph; but where is the monument which such a benefactor should receive from the hands of a grateful people, and more especially from the hands of a city, of which the enterprise he carried through to such unparalleled success has more than doubled, and is yet constantly adding to, the wealth and prosperity?—Where is the monument of grateful New York to its benefactor, De Witt Clinton? May the day not be distant when he who shall repeat this question will be referred to some lofty and fitting memorial which shall attest, to all eyes and all

ages, that he whose canal has poured wealth prodigally into our streets—whose provident mind, in contributing firmly to establish and widely to spread popular instruction—has poured streams, yet more priceless, of knowledge and morality into the hearts of millions, who yet know not his name from any public record—that he, the benefactor of his own age and generation, and of generations yet unborn—did not serve an ungrateful people.

At the same meeting, W. Trimble, from the committee appointed to procure amendments to the acts for appointing and regulating pilots, reported that they had not been able to accomplish anything, and that their attempts had altogether failed.

In April, a committee from the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce asked from the New York Chamber their co-operation in inducing Congress to construct a breakwater in the Delaware, which request, after being referred to a committee and favorably reported upon, was complied with.

Another proposition from the Philadelphia Chamber met with less success; that for the substitution of a system of compulsory warehousing and cash duties, for the present system of duties on credit. A long and able report adverse to this proposition, was made to the Chamber of New York and accepted by it, and a counter memorial to that from Philadelphia was directed to be prepared and sent to Congress.

In February, 1829, a memorial was presented by the Chamber to Congress, dwelling upon "the calamitous results of the tariff of 1828," and asking for a reduction of duties.

On the 30th of April, a special meeting was called to consider of the proper mode of testifying respect for the memory of Archibald Gracie, then lately deceased. A committee was appointed to report at the next stated meeting, in May, when accordingly it was *ordered* that the date of his decease be entered on the minutes as a renewed expression of the high sense entertained of the services of the deceased while an officer of this Board, and of the grateful remembrance which it cherishes of the courtesy of his manners, his intelligence and benevolence, and of his uniform and tried integrity.

This was a high, well merited, most unusual, and therefore more precious tribute to the memory of a good man, who no longer, at the period of his death, and for several years before, had considered himself as belonging to the society.

It was well merited. Adversity such as falls at times upon the most cautious merchant, had fallen upon Archibald Gracie, and he who for more than a third of a century had pursued with signal industry, intelligence, liberality and success, the high and honorable calling of a merchant, saw himself stricken down in his advanced years, by a succession of disasters which no prudence could avert, or sagacity foresee.

Mr. Gracie was a native of Scotland, and left his birthplace, Dumfries, about the same time with Wm. Ewart and John Reid, youths of his own age, and alike bent on seeking their fortunes in the commercial world. Mr. Ewart directed his steps to Liverpool, and became there the head of the house, well known to American merchants, of Ewart, Rutson & Co. Mr. Reid found his theatre in London, and there became the head of another well known house, Reid, Irving & Co. Mr. Gracie crossed the sea, after the close of the war, established himself in Petersburg, Virginia, and soon made for himself a position and a name there. Called by his business occasionally to New York, he here met with the wife who constituted the happiness of his after life, Miss Rogers; and this circumstance, combining with the better field which New York presented to a man of Mr. Gracie's reach of mind for the prosecution of business, determined him to remove to this city about 1791; and here he labored honorably, diligently, and for long years, most successfully. His habits as a man of business were those of great self-reliance, great promptness and great decision. Wealth flowed in upon him, but he valued it only as it enabled him to indulge the generous feelings of a nature that never harbored a selfish thought—the noble impulses of a heart which found its delight in conferring benefits, relieving distress, promoting every good aim and aspiration. His family, his domestic hearth, was the home of happiness—of hospitality—of all the Christian graces and virtues. Of a cheerful temper and most winning and gentle manners himself, the sunshine of his ample brow and bright, quick, but smiling eyes, diffused itself over all around—his footstep as it entered the sanctuary of home from the labor of the counting-house, fell upon every ear as the most welcome sound, for he was beloved as such a man only can be beloved.

In his public walk as in his private life he was without blemish or reproach. His views of human nature were hopeful. Distrust was foreign to him wholly—honest, confiding, unsuspect-

ing himself—he would not soil his mind, nor sour his own hopeful temper, by suspecting the motives or the integrity of others. He carried his heart in his hand, and a nobler one does not beat on earth.

When the storm came, which after long and vigorous struggling overthrew him, he lamented less his own privations, his own altered condition, than that of those most dear to him; the loss of fortune, as carrying with it the loss of the means of self-indulgence, or of ostentation, or display, touched him not at all; but it did touch him nearly that the hand which had never turned away the suffering or the destitute, was now powerless for acts of benevolence.

He died in this city in his 74th year, mourned and honored most by those who most nearly lived with and knew him.

During the remainder of the year 1830, and the beginning of 1831, little business of moment was transacted.

The President, Robert Lenox, summoned an extra meeting of the Chamber on the 6th of July, to consider of the proper mode of testifying respect for the late James Monroe, ex-President of the United States, who died in the city on the preceding 4th inst.

The Chamber adopted resolutions of regret and respect, and determined to attend in a body the funeral ceremonies.

The Hellgate and East River pilots now came in for their share of animadversion, and at the February meeting in 1832, a petition was voted to the Legislature of this State, praying that coasting vessels trading from Troy, Albany and New York to eastern ports, through the Sound, may be exempted from pilotage fees, which they are now by law obliged to pay, when they neither need nor employ pilots, the masters thereof being, themselves, at least as skillful as the branch pilots.

In April, 1832, another memorial was voted to Congress for a new custom-house.

No quorum seems to have been formed from November, 1833, to May, 1834. At this meeting a series of resolutions were adopted, against a project then mooted, of causing the city hall to be sold to the General Government for a custom-house and post-office, and upon these resolutions was founded a strong memorial to the Secretary of the Treasury, dissuading him from any such arrangement, as extremely inconvenient to the com-

merce of the city. A committee of the Chamber was directed to proceed to Washington with this memorial and the resolutions upon which it was founded, in order to confer with the President and Secretary of the Treasury, and represent to them the evils of such a scheme. In consequence of this earnest interposition of the Chamber, the President, as was announced to the committee by the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. McLane, determined to carry out the original plan of building the custom-house in Wall street, where it now stands, an ornament to the city, and convenient for the merchants.

On the 3d of December '33, a report in favor of laying the foundations of a Commercial Library was adopted, and resolutions were passed, appropriating $500 as a commencement, and appointing a committee of five to carry into effect these resolutions. The library was to be placed in the room, in the Exchange, where the Chamber met. It does not appear that any effect was given to these resolutions, nor that any steps towards carrying them into execution were ever taken.

A project for a ship canal round the Falls of Niagara, and of a railroad from Lake Erie to the Hudson, was laid before the Chamber in September, 1833, and called forth a very favorable expression of opinion, and a committee was appointed to publish the plan of the proposed canal, and a pamphlet explanatory thereof, for general distribution—the cost, not exceeding two hundred dollars, to be paid by the Chamber.

During the year 1835, the minutes of the Chamber are unusually barren. The following entry, under date of 5th of January, '36, opens the third volume of the minutes of the Chamber.

"There was no meeting of the Chamber of Commerce this day, in consequence of the total destruction of the Merchants' Exchange, and the confusion created in all business arrangements by the dreadful and most disastrous fire on the night of the 16th of December, which has laid waste the greater part of the business section of the First Ward. The books and pictures, and the corporate seal of the Chamber, fortunately were saved from the flames."

It cannot be misplaced, in reference to the grievous calamity recorded in the entry just read, to say that the undepressed spirit and unfaltering energy displayed by the body of merchants and traders of the city, under such losses and disap-

pointments as that fire occasioned, will long be remembered with admiration, and must be regarded as having essentially contributed to the prompt renovation, in even more than its original value and substance, of the large district over which the flames swept.

In several cases foundations were commenced of new and more costly edifices, amid the glow of the expiring embers of the buildings destroyed, and it is pleasant and grateful to believe that such energy was not without its reward, and that they who *would* not be ruined by adding despondency to disaster, have reaped the fruits of their wisely directed and rare energy, in ultimate and not long-waited-for success.

At the February meeting of the Chamber, a memorial to Congress was adopted, praying for the passage of the bill then pending, for extending the term of bonds for duties in New York. The propriety of sending a memorial to the Legislature of the State, for the repeal of all laws prohibiting the establishment of foreign insurance companies among us, was discussed, and the Chamber declined to interfere.

The pilots again came up, and a memorial to the Legislature for an increase of the number was adopted.

A bill being before Congress for compelling merchant ships to carry apprentices, with a view to secure an adequate supply of experienced seamen, Mr. Goldsborough, a senator from Maryland, and chairman of the Senate's committee, to whom the bill was referred, sent a copy of it to the Chamber, with the expression of a wish for its opinion in relation thereto.

The subject was referred to a committee, and on the 18th of May a report was made by that committee, approving the general principle of the bill, but dissenting from some of its details.

In February, '37, the Chamber memorialized Congress for a law to authorize the employment of some of the vessels of the navy to cruise off the coast during the winter season, as *relief vessels*. The Chamber also passed strong resolutions in favor of the completion of the Erie railroad, and calling upon citizens of all classes to subscribe to its stock.

The pilots again troubled the Chamber, and a committee was sent to Albany to see what could be done in the premises. Happily, Congress had now passed a bill throwing the business of piloting open to competition, and New Jersey had es-

tablished a system for the appointment and regulation of pilots, for contributing to the success of which, by attending at Trenton, Capt. Hackstaff received the special thanks of the Chamber.

A strong remonstrance against the usury laws, was sent by a committee to the State Legislature, a printed copy of which is annexed to the minutes of 2d of May.

During the summer of '37, no meeting of the Chamber was held. It was at this period that our city was thrown into a sudden consternation by a well accredited rumor that a pirate vessel had been met in the track of our European packet ships, and had actually captured a Philadelphia ship—a rumor which called forth a spontaneous, prompt and gratifying expedition, organized with the utmost despatch, by the navy officers on this station, in order to seek out and capture the dangerous foe. Happily, the rumor proved unfounded; but its existence had the good effect of displaying the zeal of the navy, and of turning attention to the necessity, with so rich a commerce and so defenceless a coast as ours, of always having at hand, and in readiness, a certain amount of naval force.

At the first meeting of the Chamber after this occurrence, (7th of November,) its thanks were especially tendered to Com. Ridgely, Capts. Perry and Stringham, and Lieut. Sands, for the zeal and alacrity evinced by them in getting to sea with such force as they could collect on the spur of the occasion—and a committee was appointed to address to the President of the United States, a representation of the expediency of a permanent home squadron—as well for the relief of vessels on our coast in distress, as for the protection of our commerce—and this was the origin of the policy ever since pursued—though not always with adequate or appropriate force,—of keeping afloat, off the coast or in the harbor, ready for sea, some well equipped vessels of war.

The commercial and financial disasters which this year overspread the country, and resulted in a general suspension of specie payments, led to a correspondence between the Chamber and the Secretary of the Treasury, urging on the part of the merchants a prolongation of the credit on all bonds falling due before the first of January next—of two years—the Secretary of the Treasury signified his purpose of submitting the suggestion to Congress.

The Chamber reiterated to the Legislature its interest in the completion of the Erie railroad, and its hope that all reasonable aid might be extended to it by the Legislature. And upon Congress it again expressed the expediency of a well-regulated apprentice system for the commercial marine.

A *warehousing system* was again agitated in Congress, and the Chamber of Commerce, in February, 1838, adopted a strong memorial in favor of such a system, with the proviso, however, that the existing system of *credits* upon duties be not altered. Ten years before the Chamber had not only refused to co-operate with the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce in support of a warehousing system, but had memorialized Congress in opposition to it. Then, however, the scheme was accompanied with what seems its natural counterpart, *cash duties*. Now the Chamber adhering to its opposition to cash duties, yet favored a general warehousing system.

Both Mr. Senator Wright and Mr. Cambreleng, representatives in Congress, having informed the Chamber that Congress would not probably consent to a warehousing system and credits upon duties, the whole subject was reconsidered by the Chamber, and it was anew decided that both should be asked for, and if both could not be combined, that the preservation of the credit system of duties was to be preferred to the establishment of a general warehousing system.

A movement was made in the Chamber in March, 1839, which, however, upon being referred to and examined by a committee, was deemed inexpedient—the proposition was to ask such increased power from the Legislature as would enable the Chamber to establish a *tribunal or Court of Commerce*, with powers to determine all litigation between merchants—the trials to be by juries taken solely from the classes of merchants and traders—the juries to determine by bare majorities, and proof to be given in writing—finally the juries to be judges both of the law and the facts.

This seems, *prima facie*, a reasonable proposition, well calculated to facilitate intelligent and prompt decisions of mercantile disputes. The committee of the Chamber, nevertheless, deemed it inexpedient, and so reported, without any reasoning —directly to the Chamber—which acquiesced in the report.

The Legislature of the State having before them at the pending session in April, 1839, a bill abolishing imprisonment in the case of non-resident debtors, the Chamber forwarded a brief but forcible memorial in opposition to the bill, as likely to prove injurious to the city of New York, always a creditor city.

The President of the United States being on a visit to New York, the Chamber at the same meeting resolved to pay their respects to him.

A special meeting was summoned on the 14th of December, 1839, by the first Vice President, Isaac Carow, who announced as its object the consideration of the proper marks of respect to be shown to the memory of Lobert Lenox, late President. Appropriate resolutions were unanimously passed, and ordered to be communicated to the family of the deceased, and to be entered on the minutes of the Chamber.

Mr. Lenox is commemorated in these resolutions as "for many years a zealous, impartial and efficient officer, always interested in the well-being and success of the Chamber, as an eminent merchant who for a period beyond the ordinary course of human life had been distinguished for great prudence, a clear and sound judgment, and unblemished reputation."

Robert Lenox was a native of the town of Kirkcudbright, in Scotland, whence he was sent at an early age to an uncle residing in Philadelphia, then a commissary-general of prisoners in the British service. He went to school for a time at Burlington, New Jersey, and afterwards entered his uncle's office as an assistant, where he continued till the close of the Revolutionary war. He married in this city in 1783, immediately after which he made a short visit to his native country, and on his return settled here as a merchant, where he remained permanently until his death, which occurred in December, 1839, in the 81st year of his age.

Mr. Lenox commenced business on a scale commensurate with his means, then slender in the extreme; but he gradually and steadily enlarged his transactions till he eventually became one of the most extensive as well as successful merchants in the United States, and such was his prudence and sagacity that it is believed there was not a year during the whole period of his actual mercantile life in which he did not find his property greater at the close than it had been at the commence-

ment. This will be deemed the more surprising when it is considered that a fierce war raged in Europe during the whole time, and that the commerce of this country was continually subjected to the most flagrant injuries at the hands of the principal belligerents. It may also be mentioned as an evidence of industry, which was a prominent feature in his character, that even when most extensively engaged in business, and having no partner to assist him, he invariably posted his own books.

After the war of 1812 he gradually relinquished mercantile pursuits, occupying himself with the care of his own estate, which had then become large, and which afforded him amusement for a few hours daily till within a very short period of his death.

At a special meeting of the Chamber on 10th June, 1840, convened for the purpose of filling the office of President, made vacant by the death of Mr. Lenox, and that of Treasurer, in like manner made vacant by the death of Mr. Henry J. Wyckoff, eighty-three members were present—a number far exceeding that usually in attendance at regular meetings.

Before proceeding to the election, a resolution amendatory of the By-laws was adopted, to the effect that no person should be eligible to the office of President, Vice President or Treasurer for more than three years in succession.

The choice for President fell on Mr. Isaac Carow, the first Vice President, and Mr. J. I. Palmer was chosen Treasurer.

At its regular meeting on 4th February, the condition of the wharves of the city was brought to the consideration of the Chamber, in connection with a project then before the Common Council, respecting which the Committee of Wharves and Piers of that body, had requested the views of the Chamber.

The points presented were:—1. As to the expediency of changing the present mode of charging and collecting wharfage. 2. As to the expediency of increasing the rates now paid, and if increased, to what extent. 3. As to the expediency of charging wharfage as is done in Boston, on goods landed. Any other information or suggestion were invited by that committee, which might enable it to report upon the subject, in a manner satisfactory at once to the commercial interests and to the wharf owners, who complained of being inadequately remunerated.

The committee of the Chamber to whom the subject had been referred, reported their concurrence in opinion with the committee of the Common Council—that the condition of the wharves and piers was a subject of just reproach; but if, as was assumed, their neglected state was to be explained by the inadequate compensation afforded by present rates, for the use of said property, the committee of the Chamber could only consent to recommend increased rates, after the wharves should be improved and enlarged, being as they were in their actual condition, quite unequal to the demands of the shipping. To the principle of charging a wharfage on goods, the committee perceived "no well-founded objection, provided the security and accommodation afforded shall warrant the charge."

The committee suggest, as a matter of expediency—if to be accomplished on reasonable terms—that the city, which already owns many wharves and piers, should purchase and control all the piers and wharves, which then might be subject to one uniform system of rules and regulations.

They moreover approve of a plan then before the Common Council "for extending all the piers of the East River, from the Battery to Roosevelt street, so as to correspond with pier No. 15 at the Coffee House Slip, and to run parallel with South street." They further suggest the expediency of constructing a new basin on the North River, for the accommodation of steamboats and other river craft laid up during the winter, which now occupy space between the Battery and Old Slip, which is much needed for coasting vessels whose trade is not interrupted by winter.

This report was accepted by the Chamber, and the same committee was continued, in order that when the matter should be brought before the Legislature, they might attend to it in behalf of the Chamber.

These recommendations of the Chamber of Commerce—only 16 years ago—for diminishing the *area* of the rivers, while enlarging that of the docks, present matter worthy of serious reflection at this period, when not only the merchants but all interests in our city, are looking with no little alarm at the possible, nay, too probable, evils of these continued encroachments on the bed of the rivers that bound and encircle us.

Mr. J. G. King, from a committee to whom it had been referred to "consider what steps should be taken to increase the usefulness of the Incorporation," made a report, which was ordered to be printed and to be sent to each member of the Chamber, with a view to future discussion. This report, with certain amendments, proposed by Mr. J. R. Hurd, was largely discussed at a special meeting on 17th March, held by permission of the Mayor, at his office in the City Hall, and the result was the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. To elect a large number of new members.

2. To procure offices of a suitable size and in a central position, for the accommodation of the Library of the Chamber, and for the daily meeting of such members as may choose to resort there, it being recommended that every one appear there once a day.

3. To appoint a clerk with a moderate salary, whose duty it shall be to give his constant attendance between 9 A. M. and 9 P. M., who shall record daily the time of high water, the course of the wind, all foreign arrivals, together with such other items of information as may seem of general importance; to have files of newspapers from different parts of the Union—one at least from each state—and that one, the *State paper;* together with such public documents and important laws as may be transmitted to the office; to perform the office of Librarian or assistant Librarian, and such other duties as may be required by the Chamber.

4. To keep a book in which shall be transcribed at large, from the minutes of the Standing Committee for determining matters in dispute, the cases submitted to that committee, with the decisions thereupon, for the information and reference of the merchants generally.

5. That an annual amount not exceeding *ten* dollars be paid to the Treasurer by each member of the Chamber, in addition to the fee for initiation, said annual payment to entitle the member, in addition to the use of the offices and library of this Corporation for the year ensuing, to the privilege of submitting any case for arbitration to the committee for determining matters in dispute, free of any charge for fees so far as such party may be concerned; which uses and privileges are to cease on omission or refusal, after due notice, to continue the annual payment as above, such amount being payable in advance.

6. This article, which, with a proposed amendment, contemplated a change in the composition and mode of electing the Standing Committee on Arbitration, and the creation of a Board of Appeal from the decisions of that committee, was recommitted, and the result was finally reached, in the adoption of what now constitute Articles XII. and XIII. of the By-Laws of the Chamber. These establish and point out a method of choosing the Committee on Arbitration and the Committee of Appeals.

7. That no persons be admitted members of this Corporation but merchants and others whose avocations are connected with the trade and commerce of the country—who are American citizens, or have given notice of their intention to become such—or continue members, if not resident in the city of New York, or regularly transacting business there; but the privileges enumerated in the Vth proposition may be extended to persons other than those who are not members, or to persons not qualified to become members of the Corporation, subject to such regulations as the Chamber may from time to time direct.

8. That a new article be inserted in the By-Laws in relation to the annual payment by each member, in addition to the initiation fee.

9. That a committee of *nine* members be appointed to carry into effect the above report, and to select and receive names of persons to be proposed for admission to the Chamber.

The committee appointed were J. G. King, J. De Peyster Ogden, Jas. Lee, Chas. H. Russell, Wm. H. Aspinwall, Shepherd Knapp, Jas. J. Boyd, J. R. Hurd, P. M. Wetmore.

It is to be lamented that up to this hour these judicious resolutions remain a dead letter. Shall it always be thus? Shall not the time come when the Chamber of Commerce of New York shall have its own Hall—its Library—its Archives—its Gallery of Pictures—its Statuary—its Museum—and above all, its Courts of Arbitration and Appeal?

The New York pilots yet clinging to an expiring and odious monopoly, were active in Congress to procure the repeal of the law of 1837, which, by authorizing the competition of New Jersey pilots, had so greatly contributed to the security of life and property on our immediate coast. The Chamber, at their meeting in May, adopted a strong memorial to Congress, setting forth conclusively the grounds upon which the existing law should be maintained.

At the June meeting, at which was a larger attendance than common, the subject of a uniform Bankrupt Law occupied attention, when the following resolution was unanimously passed:

Resolved, as the sense of this Chamber, that no bankrupt law can be devised which would not operate unequally in the present condition of the commercial interests, and injuriously to the community at large.

A committee of five was appointed to prepare a memorial to Congress, in conformity with the above resolution, and to present it at an adjourned meeting, to be held at an early day.

At that adjourned meeting a memorial to Congress was presented and adopted, in which, after suggesting doubts whether,

in the then disturbed state of commerce and finance, (June, 1840,) any bankrupt law could be devised that would not be more mischievous than beneficial, expressed the confident opinion that "a bankrupt law, to be extensively useful or permanently beneficial, should be both compulsory and voluntary—that as a compulsory act, it should apply to traders only—and as a voluntary act, it should require the assent of a majority of the creditors in interest to release the applicant, with large discretionary power in the judge to relieve any cases of hardship or oppression, and that no debt should be preferred." An unsuccessful effort was made to include corporations in the provisions of such a law.

At a subsequent meeting, a bankrupt bill being then before the Senate of the United States, a committee was appointed to proceed to Washington for the purpose of promoting the passage of a bankrupt law which should embrace these provisions: 1. That no debtor should have his discharge, whether as voluntary or involuntary bankrupt, without the consent of such creditors as represent at least one half of the amount of his debts. 2. Nor if he shall have made, subsequent to June, 1840, or in contemplation of the passage of a bankrupt law, an assignment by which any preference is given or secured to one creditor over another, unless such discharge be assented to by a majority of creditors in interest, who are not preferred. 3. That the law shall not take effect before July, 1841.

This subject continued to occupy most of the attention of the Chamber during the residue of this year and the early part of 1841, a division of opinion having manifested itself among the members as to the expediency of including moneyed corporations in the provisions respecting compulsory bankruptcy. The Chamber finally decided *against* the expediency of their being included. The reports, both of the majority and the minority on this point, are spread upon the minutes of the Chamber, and set forth clearly the arguments on each side.

The pilots again; a new revenue bill before Congress; the expenses and charges of transacting business at the custom-house, and for storage; the management of the post-office, and other topics of general interest, formed the subjects of discussion and elaborate reports during the year '41. There is a report under date of March 2d, on the "unnecessary burdens upon trade, more particularly minor charges and administrative

expenses," which might well be consulted now, when these burdens are largely increased, and the policy seems to be settled, though fraught with wrong and corruption at every stage—that party organizations may rightfully be cemented and rewarded at the expense of the business classes of the city, by the multiplication of officers and of charges in all the public departments, but especially in the custom-house and post-office.

A memorial to the Legislature was adopted, praying that inspection laws, especially as applying to flour and tobacco, the produce of other States, be repealed.

Resolutions of regret and condolence on the death of President Harrison were adopted at the meeting of 6th April.

The vexed subject of a national bank was brought to the notice of the Chamber, at a special meeting called upon the requisition of five members. A large attendance, (56,) on 21st April, attested the interest of the Chamber in the question, when a resolution was adopted by a large majority to memorialize Congress for an act to incorporate "a National Bank, with such capital and such provisions as in the wisdom of the Legislature may appear expedient."

A substitute for this resolution, instructing the committee to report upon the "expediency or inexpediency" of such a step, was voted down, as was a motion to postpone the whole subject indefinitely.

On the 24th May a very able memorial to Congress, in favor of a national bank, was reported, discussed and adopted.—36 ayes, nays 20.

At this period, when the necessity of a national bank seems no longer admitted, and when the *Sub Treasury* substitute, which, as understood at the time, was so overwhelmingly condemned, as a mischievous experiment, by the popular vote in the election of Gen. Harrison, is accepted without complaint any where—thanks mainly to the then unknown and unanticipated gold of California—the historical statements and the arguments upon the merits concerning a national bank, form a curious chapter in the annals of the Chamber.

Congress was again memorialized in July, against "a Revenue Law" then under consideration, on the ground that it was hastily prepared, without adequate inquiry through appropriate committees, and that it would affect injuriously "many leading

interests in our country, and prove ruinous to some important branches of industry."

In Feb., '42 the Chamber passed resolutions approving a plan submitted to them by R. L. Stevens, through Vice President J. G. King, which had been laid before Congress, for constructing a shot and shell proof iron steamer, for the defence of the harbor of New York, and commending unreservedly to the confidence of the government the said R. L. Stevens, as an engineer of "extensive practical and scientific knowledge." Very earnest resolutions were also adopted in March, in favor of continued appropriation for the Coast Survey, under Mr. Hassler. Memorials to the Legislature of the State for a repeal or modification, at least as respects the city, of the usury laws, and to Congress for the separation of the letter mail, on the great Southern route, from the paper mail, so that the former might be accelerated—and in favor of a warehousing system, were adopted during the spring of 1842. At a numerously attended meeting in April, a memorial to Congress in favor of a *Discriminating Tariff*, presented from a committee by C. A. Davis, and which, by order of the Chamber, had been printed, was discussed with unusual animation. A substitute therefor, by Mr. J. R. Hurd, declaring that the special office of the Chamber of Commerce was to foster and watch our foreign trade, and that other branches of industry must look to other sources for the expression and protection of their particular interests; and that, moreover, those employed in navigation and foreign commerce are as much included under the class of domestic industry as any other—after being debated, was withdrawn by the mover, when the whole subject was, on motion of Mr. Goodhue, indefinitely postponed.—39 to 36.

On Tuesday, 3d May, '42, at its regular meeting, the Chamber elected Mr. *J. De Peyster Ogden*, the first Vice President, President, in the place of Mr. Carow, who declined a re-election.

Of Mr. Carow, who has since paid the debt of nature, we have not succeeded in obtaining any details that might aid our own recollection of him as an old acquaintance—a fellow passenger under trying circumstances, on a voyage to Europe towards the close of the war of 1812—and as a man of mark upon 'Change, though of the greatest modesty and simplicity, Mr. Carow was of very retiring disposition and habits—yet of very clear percep-

tions and decided convictions—amiable and gentle, though with a short, quick manner occasionally, that might be taken for impatience, but for the kind smile which so usually accompanied it. He was diligent, cautious and exact in business, and therefore successful, and at his death left behind him no enemies and a spotless name.

A committee was appointed at the meeting in August, to cooperate with the city authorities in giving courteous reception to and facilitating the inquiries of a commission from France, just arrived, on board the French war steamer *Gomer*, with a view to extend the friendly intercourse between the two countries, and especially to the establishment of a line of steamers between them. No quorum was had again till November, when a committee was appointed to receive and welcome D. Webster, the Secretary of State, on account of his agency in negotiating the recent treaty with England. An able memorial *against* cash duties, without a general warehousing system, was adopted and ordered to be forwarded, duly authenticated, to Congress.

At the February meeting in '43, a newspaper reporter having presented himself to take reports of what passed in the Chamber, it was resolved that no person could be present at the meetings of the Chamber other than members thereof, except by permission of the Chair—and the reporter accordingly withdrew.

A well argued protest by a committee of the Chamber, of which Mr. Geo. Griswold was chairman, against a proposed reduction of officers in the New York Custom House, was adopted.

Another effort of the New York pilots to hold fast to their monopoly being in progress before the Legislature, a strong memorial against it was forwarded by the Chamber.

At the regular meeting, 2d May, 1843, the annual choice of officers being in order, Jonathan Goodhue was chosen President, and Samuel Fox and Geo. T. Trimble, Vice Presidents.

These three gentlemen all declined, and a case unprovided for, so far as appeared by the By-Laws, having thus arisen, a committee was appointed at a special meeting on 8th May, to ascertain and report the proper mode of proceeding in the premises, and if need be, to take the advice of counsel. This

committee reported at a special meeting on the 9th, upon the opinion of R. Emmet, Esq., that owing to the declining of the persons elected, there had been "a failure to elect," and consequently that the old officers held over, and that under the circumstances it was the duty of the Chamber to proceed as soon as may be, after giving the usual notice, to a new election. This report was accepted, and at an election held on 3d June, J. De Peyster Ogden was chosen President, and Jas. G. King and Henry K. Bogert, Vice Presidents.

At the June meeting the tariff discussion was renewed upon the following proposition, submitted by Jonathan Goodhue:

Resolved, That whereas it would be manifestly beyond the power of Congress to suppress directly any man's lawful business or occupation, it is no less so, and is besides a dangerous usurpation, to effect the same purpose by suppressive or prohibitory duties.

Resolved, that whereas all protective duties are to an equal or greater extent suppressive or prohibitory, therefore this Chamber is decidedly opposed to protection as a principle, while it fully realizes the necessity of a *Tariff for Revenue*, and of so much suppression and protection as unavoidably results from such a tariff.

Various substitutes were offered—all, however, more or less in the free trade and anti-protective sense—when, after long discussion, the whole subject was laid on the table.

A very sensible report, adverse to any change in existing laws and usages, which hold the seller responsible for any "false packing" in cotton or other produce, was accepted by the Chamber.

A report of interest on the subject of commercial intercourse between *Texas*, as an independent nation, and the United States, was made to the Chamber, but the resolution founded upon it, asking the Senate to ratify a commercial treaty which had been negotiated between the two countries, whereby the cotton of Texas was to be received free of duty in our ports, and our vessels were to be received free of duty in the ports of Texas, was lost.

The condition of the trade with China, consequent upon the recent war between that country and Great Britain, and the commercial treaties entered into, was brought before the Cham-

ber, and a memorial to Congress was adopted, asking that the appointment be authorized of one Consul General and four Vice Consuls in that country, at competent salaries, and under prohibition to engage in any business.

A memorial adverse to duties on railroad iron was also adopted. In March, '44, appropriations were asked from Congress for light-houses on Flynn's Knoll and on Execution Rocks, in the Sound; also for a beacon on the S. E. point of Romer's Shoal.

Resolutions of regret and condolence were adopted on occasion of the explosion of the big gun on board the U. S. ship *Princeton*, by which several eminent persons were killed and others wounded.

A memorial to Congress for the establishment of a Mint in this city was adopted. The Chamber consulted by the Secretary of the Treasury on the expediency of trying *gas* for light-houses instead of *oil*, and using one of the towers on the Nevesink heights for the experiment, replied very decidedly ADVERSELY to any such attempt. They also approved the introduction of postage *stamps*, and urged the reduction of postages.

At the December meeting the Warehousing system was again commended to Congress, in a well reasoned memorial. A detailed report was also made by the committee to whom the matter had been referred, as to which party the agent who effects insurance in *mutual companies*, or those at a distance for whom he effects insurance, is entitled to the benefit of stock certificates issued from time to time by said companies to their customers.

The committee decided unanimously, that "upon general principles and upon the grounds stated in the report, *the parties* here who effect the insurance are entitled to the stock certificates," and the Chamber, by a majority of 2 to 1, sustained this conclusion.

Parker's system of nautical signals was commended to general use in the mercantile marine—and it was recommended, upon the common sense view of the question, that the old fashion of keeping ship's log-books by nautical time, (that is, making the day begin at 12 o'clock M. on the preceding day,) should be abandoned, and the civil time be in all cases observed.

In March, '45, the Chamber unanimously adopted this resolution, presented by Charles H. Marshall:

Resolved, as the sense of this Chamber, that considering the fact that the original donations of the Sailors' Snug Harbor were from a sailor and for the benefit of sailors—in the selection of a Superintendent or Governor for said institution, a preference should be given, all things else being equal, to a nautical man.

At the suggestion of the Mayor of Albany, that an appropriation then before Congress, for removing obstacles in the navigation of the Hudson below that city, might be promoted by any favorable opinion of the Chamber, resolutions were unanimously adopted urging our senators and representatives to sustain said appropriation.

The untiring monopoly pilots were again at work at Albany, having enlisted the sympathy both of Gov. Wright, who, in his message to the Legislature, adopted their views in favor of a repeal of the Pilot Law of Congress, and of the Senate's committee, to whom the matter was referred, who reported in conformity with their views. The Chamber, on 22d February, '45, adopted a memorial to the Legislature adverse to this change, so conclusive in reasoning, and so startling in facts, as to have put at rest for ever any further pretensions of these monopoly pilots, to a restoration of their unjust and most injurious privilege.

The Legislature, instead of restoring their ancient franchises, repealed all laws relating to pilots and pilotage, leaving the business to be conducted under the United States law. As this however prescribed no rules, and no penalties for misconduct or neglect, the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Underwriters, by mutual concert, organized a "Board of Pilot Commissioners," two to be appointed by the Chamber, two by the Board of Underwriters and one by the Navy Department, who should have entire charge of this subject, and whose certificate should be conclusive evidence to ship-masters, that the party presenting it was a duly licensed pilot. This commission has been and is in beneficial operation, and the pilots licensed by it, and those licensed by the State of New Jersey, are alone authorized to conduct vessels in and out of Sandy Hook.

A project, agitated about this time in the western part of our State, to induce the Legislature to impose the same amount of tolls on merchandise transported on the Oswego Canal, 38 miles

long, as was imposed on the eastern section of the Erie Canal, nearly 200 miles long, naturally attracted the attention of the Chamber, and a brief and forcible remonstrance was adopted against the unjust scheme.

At the May meeting, '45, the allotted term of three consecutive years of Mr. Ogden's presidency having expired, J. G. King, 1st Vice President, was chosen President.

Of Mr. Ogden, who yet lives in honor and usefulness, in conformity with our original plan of abstaining from any special notice of "the living," we may not speak in detail as we have done of those of his predecessors in the Presidency of the Chamber. It is enough to say, in a community where he is so well known and so much considered, that he adorns the profession of a merchant by a cultivated intellect and an upright life, worthy of the old Batavian race from which he springs. He has been connected with our commerce and chief commercial men for many years, and to his pen we are indebted for many of the strongest and cleverest papers embodied in the minutes of the Chamber.

A letter from Professor Hackley, of Columbia College, urging the establishment of an observatory near the city, which had been referred to a select committee, was most favorably reported upon by the Chairman, *J. D. P. Ogden*, on 4th Nov., "as an object well worthy of the consideration of the Chamber, alike for its utility to the commercial interests of the city, and for the maintenance of its character as an advocate of the cause of Science." The report sketches with vigorous and ready pen the various advantages to all pursuits of such an observatory, which it was proposed to place under the charge of Columbia College, and warmly recommends the enterprize to "the favorable consideration of the Chamber, and to the patronage of the mercantile community." The report was unanimously accepted and ordered published; and there, unfortunately for the interest of science and commerce and the reputation of the city, the matter rests until this day.

An increased and unnecessary tax upon sailors, in the shape of hospital money, having at the instance of the Trustees of the Sailors' Retreat, been authorized by the Legislature, it was earnestly condemned by the Chamber, and a committee was appointed to urge upon the Trustees of the Retreat not to collect

this tax, so partial and oppressive in its nature, and not required by the wants of the institution. This expedient having failed, a memorial in the same sense was adopted to the Legislature. The Quarantine Laws and the Light-house System came under the consideration of the Chamber at this period, and as to the latter it was resolved to memorialize Congress, praying for an inquiry into the state of the light-house service of the United States, and into the expediency of increasing the number of light-houses and improving the same. The Sub-treasury Bill, before Congress in March, '46, led to much discussion in the Chamber, and a memorial was finally addressed to the National Legislature, opposing the contemplated law, especially on the ground of the suddenness of the change to an exclusively metallic currency." A formal protest of seven or eight members, was, by consent, entered on the minutes, against the specific averment in the memorial that the proposed measure would exert "an impartial influence *for evil* upon the various interests of the country." The words underlined were those specifically objected to. At this day the representations of the probable effects of payments in coin, and anticipations of injury to all pursuits—so forcibly stated, and urged with so much conviction—cannot be read without leading the reflecting mind to ponder upon the contrast between the fearful anticipations of that day, in view of what was looked upon as a great evil, and the actual unquestioning acquiescence in the policy now paramount of the measure then so much dreaded. Possibly the discovery of California's golden treasures may help to explain this contrast, and account for the present popularity, it may almost be called, of the Sub-treasury law.

In September, '46, the Chamber passed resolutions approving the course of *Louis McLane*, minister of the United States in England, in promoting the peaceful solution of the Oregon boundary dispute, and appointed a committee to receive and welcome him on his return to his own country. This duty was properly discharged, and the address to and reply of Mr. McLane are entered on the minutes of the Chamber of 7th September.

By order of the Secretary of the Treasury, the views of the Chamber were asked by the Collector of the Port, as to the expediency of causing coasting vessels to carry lights at night, in order to avoid the danger of collision; the committee to whom

this matter was referred reported in favor of "a general law requiring *all* vessels navigating waters within the jurisdiction of the United States, when going *free* or before *the wind*, to carry a *white* light on the end of the bowsprit, and when *on* a wind to carry a *red* light in the same place." The Chamber unanimously agreed to this recommendation, and directed the report to be transmitted to the Secretary of the Treasury, through the Collector.

A report in favor of Whitney's project of a railroad to the Pacific, was made by Chas. King, from the committee having it in charge. After combating the objection that the project was visionary, by adducing the fact that a committee of the Senate of the United States had reported specifically in favor of it, with a bill for carrying it out, which was only not acted on, because of the late period in the session, (31st July,) and that at a previous session the House of Representatives had reported in favor of such an enterprize, though not specifically in favor of Mr. Whitney's plan. The report argues that the means for such a road can only be certainly obtained from the public lands—that such an application of these lands would be in strict keeping with the views entertained at an early day by Mr. Gallatin and other public men of the proper use to which these lands should be applied—and that now, while the land was yet within the control of the government, was the time for the undertaking. The necessity of such a railroad is urged "because no water communication is practicable. The Platte, the Kansas, and other streams descending from the Rocky Mountains are, as we learn from Col. Fremont's narrative, unnavigable and incapable of being made navigable. But Oregon is our own and Upper California may be, and these territories thus separated from us by the granite chain of the stony mountains, are sufficient unto themselves, if disposed to an independent existence. If it be our desire, as it is our interest, that our Union should extend from sea to sea, we must bind it by something stronger than parchment bonds—by the ties of brotherhood, of common interests, and of easy and rapid inter-communication—by the iron bands—in short, of a railroad. This, which is a political necessity, will also be a great commercial advantage. Placed, as this continent is, between Europe and Asia, we may, by a railroad, bring China within forty days of Europe, and cause to pass over our

soil the teas and silks of the one, and the fabrics of the other in mutual interchange, each leaving its toll with us by the way." The report concluded with resolutions inviting, in the name of the Chamber, "the attention of Congress" to this project, and expressing the opinion that "through the instrumentality of the National Domain only, can it be successfully accomplished," and directing copies of the report and resolutions to be forwarded to our representatives in Congress from New York, to the end that they may lay them before that body. The report and resolution were unanimously adopted.

The pilots of old monopoly still pertinaciously urged upon Congress the repeal of their beneficent law of 1837, which opened the business of pilotage to competition; and again this most unconscionable attempt of a few men, to advance their private interest at the expense of the convenience and safety of commerce, and of human life, was ably and successfully resisted by the Chamber. As we shall not again refer to this subject, it may be well here to reproduce the memorial to Congress, adopted by the Chamber on 5th January, '47, as presenting a brief and most conclusive statement of the case, by showing the beneficial operation of the law which those monopolists sought to overthrow.

MEMORIAL

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives, in Congress assembled.

The Memorial of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of New York, represents—

That the pilot service of this port was, up to the year 1837, in fact a close monopoly, the natural fruits of which were neglect of duty, and great consequent destruction of life and property.

In 1837 Congress, aroused by the then recent enormous and aggravated losses, enacted a law opening the business to adjoining States on navigable waters.

This law brought into existence a new set of pilots, under the law of New Jersey, whose skill and energy have gained for them a high reputation with the navigating interests of this port. By a report from the New Jersey Commissioners of Pilotage, it appears that since 1837, these pilots, up to the 31st Dec., 1845, had brought in from sea ..... 3895 vessels,
and taken out ..... 3725 "
and during eleven months of 1846, ... 519 "
and taken out ..... 487 "
making a total in and out of ..... 8626 vessels.

Of the 519 brought in in 1846, 496 were boarded off pilot ground. The number of pilots varied from 20 to 23 during this year.

In 1845 the Legislature of this State abolished all laws in relation to pilotage. Since then the Board of Underwriters and the Chamber of Commerce have appointed a few practical men to act (in conjunction with the commanding naval officer at this station) as a Board of Commissioners, to examine and license all persons who may apply and show themselves qualified for the service. This Board have appointed 17 pilots, known as Merchant Pilots, of whom 14 learned their business in the old New York pilot service. They have now 4 pilot-boats, viz: one on station and three for cruizing; but up to the 1st Nov. last, there were only 2 boats and 13 pilots, who have taken to sea during this year 268 vessels, 105 of which drew from 15 to 25 feet water; and brought in 237, all but 15 of them boarded off pilot ground—565 total in and out.

You will thus perceive that the wholesome competition now existing, caused the boarding off pilot ground of 496 vessels, out of 519 brought in this year by the New Jersey pilots, and of 222 out of 237, the whole number brought in by the merchant pilots; whereas, before the law of 1837, it was a rare circumstance to have a vessel boarded off pilot ground—and of 123 inward pilotages in 1835 and 1836, but *eight* were boarded *off*, and all the rest *in* shore.

Of the old pilots who seek to return to their old monopoly, by trying to induce a repeal of the law of 1837, there are probably about 70 or 75, some of whom have grown old in the service, and are becoming unfit to enter into fair competition with younger and more energetic men, and can hardly be expected to perform their duties consistently with the demands of commerce and the dictates of humanity. Of their services we have no means of giving any account.

From the foregoing hasty view of the subject, the operation of the law of 1837 must be seen to have been entirely beneficial, and has proved satisfactory to every body but the old pilots:—and WE THEREFORE, in behalf of the navigating interests, and the thousands of lives entrusted to the care and skill of pilots, respectfully but most earnestly remonstrate with your honorable bodies against any alteration or repeal of that most benevolent act of 1837.

GEORGE T. TRIMBLE,
JAMES LEE,
MOSES H. GRINNELL,
} *Committee.*

In face of such a remonstrance as this, it might be supposed impossible that any expectation could be entertained, or any serious endeavor be made by the old pilots to move Congress to the repeal of a law thus proved and approved—but party, which under our institutions, seizes upon all topics for its advancement, was appealed to, and from its often blind impulses, that success was hoped for, which reason, conscience and humanity

alike forbade. Happily, the expectation was vain, and the law of 1837 may now be regarded as irrepealable.

At the February meeting a memorial to Congress was adopted, asking the establishment at Washington of a *Hydrographical Bureau*, in connection with the Observatory now maintained there, and well equipped with instruments and observers.

A codification of the laws of the State, as prescribed by the new constitution, being then under consideration of the Legislature, the Chamber, in view of the great importance of having an experienced commercial lawyer in the commission to whom this duty was to be confided, unanimously recommended *John Duer*, Esq., as one "whose practical experience in the science of codification, apart from his legal attainments, eminently qualifies him for the duty."

An earnest remonstrance was in March addressed to the Legislature, against a bill there pending, authorizing, in addition to the poll tax of one dollar on each emigrant, the exaction of bonds in heavy penalties, from all passenger vessels, or their consignees, guaranteeing the city against any charge for the period of five years, for any infirm or diseased passenger brought into the port of New York, or for any child of the same born after arrival. It was fairly argued that the exaction of one dollar per head on all passengers, of whom by far the greater number were able-bodied and well, could only be justified at all by the necessity of creating a fund to provide for those who might be or become infirm or helpless; and that, moreover, any such law would prove inoperative for the protection of the city, inasmuch as passengers would be landed in contiguous districts where no such oppressive restrictions on their importation existed, and who could not afterwards be kept out of this city: so that while we should lose the benefit of the trade and the amount of the poll tax in such cases, the city would still be exposed to all the risk of being obliged ultimately to provide for any infirm or destitute emigrants that might thus come within our border. It was said at the same time, that if upon full view of the subject, the sum of *one dollar* a head was not deemed sufficient to secure the city against the contingency of providing for the destitute or infirm emigrant, there would be no objection on the part of ship-owners to a larger sum, so only that it be specific and payable on arrival.

At the April meeting, strong resolutions were adopted and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislature, against a scheme which, under the guise of providing for the female relatives of seamen, aimed at obtaining a share of the head tax upon seamen.

At the June meeting, upon the invitation of a committee of citizens of Chicago, the Chamber decided to send thither representatives of its body to attend the "North-western Harbor and River Convention," to be held in that city on the first Monday in July. The Chamber also voted to convene a public meeting of the citizens of New York, in order to appoint a deputation to attend the same convention. Such meeting was accordingly held at the Exchange, and appointed delegates to attend the Chicago Convention.

The committee of the Chamber, appointed to welcome the President of the United States to the city, reported that they had discharged that duty, and that the President replied in gratifying terms to the address.

A letter from Capt. Gedney, of United States Navy, was laid before the Chamber at its July meeting, referring to the then recent fact that the United States ship Ohio had grounded on the bar both in coming in and going out, drawing 24 feet 7 in. in the first case, and when outward bound drawing 25 feet 9 inches. Capt. G. ascribes the responsibility for these untoward occurrences to the opposition of the old New York pilots to the new channel, through which, says Capt. Gedney, "the same ship, when in command of Commodores Hull and Smith, and on an ebb-tide, drawing 26 feet 6 inches, had gone out, having at the time by soundings 2 feet 6 inches to spare."

A report from the committee to which was referred the letter of Capt. Gedney, brought to the knowledge of the Chamber the result of an investigation, made under their direction, by Mr. Norris and five pilots, of the depth of water in *Gedney's Channel*, which may be summed up by the concluding extract of Mr. Norris' letter, detailing the observations, soundings &c., made in and about that channel: "I do not hesitate to say that our largest class packet ships can pass in and out through Gedney's Channel, with a leading wind, at all times of tide, and frigates and ships of the line when the tide is two-thirds up and wind favorable."

Copies of the report, and of the resolutions of the Chamber founded on it, asking for some change in the character and position of several of the buoys in the channel, were transmitted under the seal of the Chamber to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. J. G. King, who had been re-elected President for three successive years, being on the point of making a visit to Europe, resigned the Chair, and on 24th September, M. H. Grinnell was chosen President.

The Chamber defined, at the December meeting, the extent to, and the condition upon, which it may and should rightfully exert its influence on questions of commercial law or usage. A letter being addressed to it asking "the opinion of the Chamber on the liability of endorsers on protested bills of exchange," it was

Resolved, That the Secretary reply, that the Chamber cannot entertain, for the decision of mercantile disputes, any *ex-parte* communication relating thereto; that all cases for arbitration must be submitted to the Committee on Arbitration, with a written statement of the facts in the case, which statement, before submission, must have the assent of, and be signed by, both parties interested.

A memorial was addressed to Congress, on the authority of investigations made by officers of the Coast Survey, asking that the navigation of Hell Gate be made safer, and that the rocks in the East River, between Governor's Island and Old Slip, be removed. The excessive fees of the Health Officer, for boarding vessels at Quarantine, came under review, and a remonstrance against them to the Legislature was agreed on, on the ground that the fees receivable for a limited commerce, had become excessive with our largely extended commerce; that moreover the duty was done chiefly by deputy, who was paid a salary of $1500 out of the Hospital Fund. The memorial states, on the authority of the Commissioners of Emigration, that for five months since their appointment, the fees of the Health Officer exceeded "ten thousand dollars, in addition to which he is provided with a house and grounds, and his table is furnished from the stores of the Quarantine Establishment."

The mortality and sickness on board some emigrant vessels this season attracted the attention of the Chamber, and committees were once and again appointed to devise a plan that

might be recommended to Congress that should ensure proper ventilation for passenger vessels, and provision for those whose improvidence might expose them to suffering on the voyage, through inadequate stores laid in, without too much burdening the ship-owner, or enhancing the price of passage. No definite result however was arrived at.

At the March Meeting, 1848, resolutions of respect and regret were adopted on occasion of the death of John Q. Adams, late President of the United States; and that the Chamber would attend the funeral procession as the remains of the august deceased passed through this city from Washington to Quincy.

Remonstrances against any increase in the rates of wharfage were passed by the Chamber; also against any change in the law which places the Marine Hospital at Staten Island under charge of the Commissioners of Emigration.

At the period of the annual election, May, '48, the President, *M. H. Grinnell*, who had been chosen to fill the residue of the time of Mr. J. G. King, who, on going abroad, resigned the Chair, signified his wish that Mr. K., who had returned home, should be restored to the Presidency; and accordingly Mr. J. G. K. was chosen President and Mr. Grinnell 1st Vice President.

A certified copy of the act incorporating the "Institution for the savings of merchants' clerks," having been received by the Chamber—at whose instance it was passed—they proceeded, as required by its provisions, to choose nine trustees to take charge of the institution.

On the 25th Nov. a large meeting of the Chamber, and of others, not subscribers, was held at the Merchants' Bank, (the usual place of meeting of the Chamber of Commerce,) for the purpose of testifying the respect of the mercantile community for the memory of *Jonathan Goodhue*, who had died on the preceding day, (Friday, 24th Nov.) Resolutions of deep regret and respect were adopted and ordered to be published, and to be transmitted to his family. A committee was also appointed to procure a bust of the deceased, which was afterwards executed by Mr. Brown, and is now in possession of the Chamber.

A committee of the Legislature, in session in this city, taking testimony as to the expediency or necessity of removing the Quarantine and the Marine Hospital from their present position, having notified the Chamber of their object, and express-

ed a wish to know its views, it was resolved that those members specially interested and informed in this matter, be requested to call upon the committee, and lay before them their opinion.

At a subsequent meeting, in Feb., '49, the Chamber unanimously adopted this resolution on the above subject: "*Resolved* that, in the opinion of this Chamber, it is *not* expedient to change the present site of the Quarantine Establishment of this port, and that all that is needful for public security is, that the proper regulations of a quarantine establishment be duly enforced."

Cheap postage, and the continuation of the coast survey by the general government, were enforced upon Congress by very able memorials at this period.

At the annual meeting in May, '49, a resolution was unanimously adopted, recommending *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* to the notice of all connected with the mercantile profession, as a "journal peculiarly adapted to the wants of the mercantile community."

The Chamber went into the election of officers, before which Mr. King, in conformity with a purpose previously announced, declined being again a candidate for re-election. Mr. Grinnell was accordingly elected, and Mr. J. D. P. Ogden was chosen 1st Vice President.

At the meeting in June it was resolved that "a second edition of the Charter, By-laws, and roll of members be printed, and that it contain also the Address delivered by Mr. Chas. King before the New York Historical Society in November last."

On 23d July the Chamber, in conformity with unvarying custom in like cases, recorded its sense of the national loss, in the recent death of the former President, *James K. Polk*.

Mr. Whitney's project of a railroad to the Pacific was again warmly endorsed by the Chamber, all the more strongly, now that California as well as Oregon had become integral and undisputed portion of our territory.

An application in behalf of the *Journal of Commerce* for leave to have a reporter at the meetings of the Chamber was granted, on condition that the Journal furnish slips of its reports to such other papers as might desire to publish them, and that the reports be submitted beforehand to the President or Secretary of the Board.

A recommendation that Congress make an appropriation for a *steam cutter* for the use of the harbor of New York, was adopted in December, '49; and also for the means to remove rocks from the East River and from Hell Gate.

At the January meeting of 1850, an elaborate and conclusive memorial to Congress was adopted, urging the justice, and showing, by irrefutable statistics of the movements of coin, the necessity of a *branch mint* in this city.

The justice of the *French claims*, as they are commonly called, upon the Government of the United States, is so well put in the annexed resolutions, adopted by the Chamber in March, 1850, that they should be more widely known, all the more that these claims, though oft acknowledged and provided for by Congress, have been vetoed by the President, and yet remain unsatisfied.

Resolved, That the capture, by French cruizers, during the war existing between the Republic of France and the Kingdom of Great Britain, prior to 1800, of upwards of six hundred American vessels and cargoes, while engaged in lawful commerce, and in violation of the laws of nations, and of treaties then existing between the French and American Governments, constituted a claim on France which was admitted by her, and which it was the unquestionable duty of our own government to maintain and enforce.

Resolved, That the Government of the United States having, by the ratification of the treaty of September, 1800, "released France from these claims, (to use the words of Mr. Madison,) for a valuable consideration in a correspondent release of the United States from certain claims upon them," did thereby assume the position previously occupied by France, and by thus barring the claimants, as against that nation as well as by its own voluntary promise in 1795, of redress in case of injury, became bound to indemnify her own citizens for the losses thus sustained.

Resolved, That the delay which has so long prevailed, and which has permitted nearly all the original claimants to pass unrequited to their graves, furnishes no apology for the longer denial of justice to their descendants, but, on the contrary, should stimulate the present generation to provide an indemnity which has been advocated for nearly half a century by many of the ablest statesmen and jurists of our country, and which is clearly required by that article of our national constitution, which declares that "private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation."

Resolved, That we earnestly recommend these claims to the early and favorable consideration of the present Congress, and that we especially invoke in their behalf the services of the Senators and Representatives of the State of New York; and that copies of these resolutions, duly authenticated, be forthwith transmitted to both houses of Congress.

If the statements in these resolutions respecting the French claims be, as is most undoubtingly to be assumed they are, correctly made, it is hard for any fair mind to comprehend the delay, which a government so rich as this, and which should be just, interposes to their settlement.

The Chamber, consulted by a Senator of the United States as to the probable effect upon the commercial interests, of the abolition of corporal punishment on board vessels of the merchant service, replied by a resolution, that they were in possession of no facts which would authorize the recommendation of any change in the discipline on board vessels of the commercial marine.

At the July meeting, 1850 resolutions of regret and condolence on the death of President Taylor were passed. During two or three of the summer and autumn months of this year, as heretofore, no quorum was had at the regular times of meeting.

In January, '51, a well reasoned report was made by Mr. George Curtis, from the committee appointed to inquire into the expediency of creating a bureau for the adjustment of private claims upon the United States. This report, which the Chamber adopted, was adverse to any action in the premises by the Chamber, for the very sensible reasons set forth in the following extract: "Your committee are opposed to memorializing Congress on this subject, because they conceive that it is not a matter within the peculiar province of a Chamber of Commerce. It can scarcely be said to treat of any question of mercantile law or usage; it has no exclusive bearing upon commercial interests. There is now and then a claim, doubtless, which concerns merchants or ship-owners, or has arisen in commercial pursuits, but the great mass is believed to come from other quarters. The merits of particular claims, however, and the process by which all claims shall be adjudicated, are separate questions. We may be well satisfied as to one, and yet doubt as to the other. What competency has the Chamber to pronounce upon the best mode of determining such claims as are usually examined in Congress by the respective committees on public lands—on pensions and revolutionary claims—on revolutionary pensions—on private land claims, and on invalid pensions? Certainly no more than is possessed by other portions of the community. Why, then, should we go out of our way to advo-

cate a measure, of whose fitness we confessedly do not feel ourselves specially qualified to judge, and in which the class which the Chamber in some sort is supposed to represent, has no peculiar interest? * * * * If we often go out of our legitimate sphere we shall endanger the consideration we are entitled to when we keep within it. If we speak upon every topic we shall soon cease to be heeded upon any. The Chamber cannot step out of its true path without lessening its dignity, impairing its usefulness and detracting from the weight of its judgment. Entertaining these views, your committee recommend that the Chamber adopt no further proceedings upon the subject."

This sensible recommendation was at once concurred in by the Chamber.

At the February meeting, a memorial to Congress was adopted, co-operating therein with the citizens of the north-eastern portion of North Carolina, who had asked the aid of the Chamber towards obtaining appropriations for opening a good inlet into Albemarle Sound, upon a "plan approved by Generals Bernard and Gratiot and Col. Totten." The Chamber, in adopting this memorial, place their interposition distinctly on the ground "that the work proposed is one calculated to benefit the commerce and shipping interests of the whole country, and thus is a national object."

The pilots, the eternal pilots! were again troubling the Legislature, the merchants and the Chamber, a law being then under consideration at Albany for regulating pilots and pilotage in the harbor of New York. All previous laws having been repealed, the business had been left to regulate itself under free competition, and the Chamber, after being importuned to favor the enactment of a new law, determined, on the contrary, to "remonstrate against any law relating to the pilotage of vessels in and out of Sandy Hook;" *because*, according to almost universal opinion, "the business never was so well conducted as it is at present, in consequence of the wholesome competition among pilots, which regulates the matter much better than any law can do."

Certain sections in an act before the Legislature, "to amend the laws for the assessment and collection of taxes," were brought to the notice of the Chamber by the report of a committee to whom a copy of the act had been referred, and an earnest re-

monstrance was adopted against the sections, subjecting to taxation all merchandize and produce, whether foreign or domestic, sent to this city for sale, as enforcing taxes for the same property both on the debtor and the creditor, and as investing the assessor with inquisitorial powers.

An able report, accompanied by the draft of a bill to be submitted to the Legislature, for establishing "a Court of Commerce in the city of New York," was laid before the Chamber at the May meeting in '51, and discussed at large, without, however, arriving at any conclusion. This court was to consist of a judge, and not less than two nor more than four associate judges, to be chosen by the Chamber from among its own members, to decide cases with or without juries, (also to be taken from members of the Chamber,) as the parties litigant might elect; to be a court of record, with all the ordinary powers of such a court, and to be maintained by the costs on suits, if sufficient, if not, the balance to be paid by the Supervisors of the city, from the common funds, it being stipulated that any excess of costs over expenses should be paid into the city treasury.

There is much speciousness in the notion of referring to a court of merchants mercantile disputes; for it must be confessed that in the ordinary composition of the juries, and very often in the qualifications of the judges of our civil courts, there is not much upon the whole to inspire confidence in their competency to determine intricate suits, turning upon the usage of merchants, or abstruse accounts, or foreign usages, currencies and standards; yet the inconvenience of special courts for special pursuits and vocations is obvious, and confusion could hardly fail to result from interpolating upon the judicial hierarchy, a branch which, purporting to explain and administer the law, would yet be distinct from and wholly independent of that hierarchy, with different forms, processes and officers.

The Chamber, therefore, acted with its wonted caution and discretion in laying this subject on the table.

The President of the United States being about to visit the city, the Chamber, at a special meeting, called for the purpose, on 12th May, '51, appointed, according to usage, a committee of its body to unite with the municipal authorities in a reception of the President.

At the meeting in June, Mr. Grinnell, re-elected President for the third time, revived that provision of the charter which requires the officers of the Chamber to take an oath, faithfully to execute their duties. It had long fallen into desuetude. Mr. Grinnell presented to the Chamber the form of oath he had taken before a commissioner, (in the absence from town of his predecessor in the Chair,) and then proceeded, as by the charter he has authority to do, to administer the oath to the other officers.

The oath is in this form: I, A. B., elected to the office of—— of the Chamber of Commerce, do hereby swear or affirm, that I will duly and *faithfully* execute such office during my continuance in it.

A special meeting was held 14th June, '51, "to consider the probable effects of the proposed enlargement of the Battery upon the commerce of this port." Major Delafield, of U. S. Engineers, and Lieut. Woodhull, U. S. Navy, who had been much occupied in soundings and surveys of the harbor, appeared before the Chamber, and stated their apprehension of mischief from the projected encroachment upon the waters of the harbor at the Battery. The Chamber, after these gentlemen withdrew, voted their thanks to them for the interesting details and information they had furnished, and then passed very strong resolutions condemning this enlargement, and expressing their fear of serious and irreparable injury to the harbor by the continuous building of piers, and the fillings up that follow the same both in the East and North rivers. A committee of five of the most influential members was appointed to present a copy of these resolutions to the Mayor, and to urge him to "oppose all measures which may result in an injury to the navigation of those noble rivers, which are now the pride of our city."

The mortality among American seamen in foreign ports, and especially in the ports of Havana, Rio Janeiro, on the coast of Africa, and in the East and West Indies, is forcibly dwelt upon, in a memorial to Congress, adopted by the Chamber in October, '51. Copies of it were sent to the Chambers of Commerce of all our cities, with a request that they would co-operate in the object. The claim upon Congress, to provide in some fitting way, relief for this meritorious class of our countrymen, is

placed—independently of the calls of humanity and patriotism—upon the material facts that, under the name of Hospital money, every seaman contributes twenty cents a month from his wages—the ostensible object and only justification of which tax are, to provide for their care and comfort in sickness; that from this source, from unclaimed sums due deceased seamen, and from uncalled-for prize-money, a sum amounting, it is said, to more than a *million of dollars* has accumulated in the Public Treasury. It is urged most irresistibly, one would think, that this amount—which would be ample—should be appropriated to the proper care and relief of our sick seamen in foreign ports.

In February, '52, another very strong memorial was addressed to Congress, asking this time—not for a Branch Mint—but that the Mint of the United States be transferred from Philadelphia to New York—for the very sufficient reasons that *two thirds* of the gold from California comes first to New York; that *two thirds* of the whole revenue of the United States from customs are paid in coin in this port; and that of the $52,000,000 in gold coined at the Philadelphia mint during the year 1851, probably $50,000,000 went from New York, at a cost to the owners of the bullion of $125,000.

The state of the usury laws occupied attention, and unanimous resolutions were passed, asking for the enactment of a law that should legalize loans upon bonds, bills, notes, &c., not having more than 12 months to run, at any rate of interest that might be agreed upon by the parties, and restricting bank loans and discounts to 7 per cent.; and also loans on mortgage. Application was also made to Congress for an alteration in the article of our treaty with France, which permits a duty of *five francs* per ton to be levied on American vessels in French ports. The grounds of this application were, that two thirds of the tonnage employed in the trade between the two countries being American, the lower the rate of duty established by reciprocal agreement, the more favorable it would be to our interests; and, moreover, that in consequence of recent changes in the navigation laws of England, English vessels are admitted into French ports at a duty almost nominal: so that an American steamer of the size of those of the Havre line, pays nearly *one thousand* dollars more tonnage duty than an English steamer of the same size—a difference operating very injuriously to our shipping engaged in trade with France.

A remonstrance to the Legislature was agreed to, against any alteration in the law regulating the duties, &c. of Marine Inspectors and Port Wardens, without previous consultation with those interested in navigation.

The comparative inefficiency and absolute mismanagement of the *light-houses* on our coast, were made the subject of an able and searching report at the annual meeting in May, '52; and resolutions were adopted warmly seconding the recommendation of a Light-house Committee raised by Congress, for the permanent establishment of a Light-house Board.

At this annual meeting, the stated time of service of M. H. Grinnell having expired, Mr. Elias Hicks, 1st Vice President, was chosen his successor.

Of Mr. Grinnell the time has not come—far distant be it—to speak as we speak of the dead, and therefore in recording his relinquishment of the presidency of the Chamber, we are restricted by our rule to the mere communication of the fact, adding, only, that in public spirit, in mercantile success, in social position, and in the possession of hosts of friends, he holds a place which makes the name of Moses H. Grinnell a household word almost throughout our land.

Large numbers were added about this time to the Chamber, and awakened interest in it seems to have prevailed, as evinced by the fuller attendance at the monthly meetings.

In June the Chamber recommended to the special consideration of Congress "a reciprocity arrangement with the British North American Provinces for the free interchange of the natural productions of the respective countries; embracing, also, a full and joint participation in the fisheries, and the free navigation of the St. Lawrence;" and likewise called upon them, in "the exercise of a paramount duty, to take proper and efficient measures, and make the most liberal appropriations to avert the injurious consequences to the commerce of the country, by causing to be removed, with the least possible delay, any impediment which may affect the navigation of that most important river."

An application was likewise made for a grant of *five thousand* dollars towards the purchase of a cemetery for seamen, who die at the hospital in this city, averaging from 100 to 120 every year. These are maintained by the United States Treasury, (from the proceeds of the hospital tax paid by seamen,) and

provision for the expenses of their burial is likewise made from the same fund; but there being no special place allotted for their interment, they are for the most part buried among paupers and criminals in Potter's Field. The apprehension of such a disposal of their remains is represented in the memorial of the Chamber to Congress, as "peculiarly distressing to seamen, inmates of the Hospital, in the prospect of death—and that they often give utterance to their feelings in the most impressive language." It is sad to think that such a representation as this should have been made in vain, and the more so, when, as has already been stated, a very large surplus exists in the United States Treasury of the fund composed of the excess beyond expenditure of the hospital tax upon seamen.

At the July meeting, application was made to Congress for the repayment of $12,500, expended from private sources, for *M. Maillefert's* successful operations in blasting the rocky obstructions to navigation in Hell Gate, and for an additional appropriation of $10,000 for still further blastings in Hell Gate, and on Diamond Reef, in the East River, between Governor's Island and the Battery, so as to secure a greater depth of water in both places.

A memorial to Congress, of the importing merchants, praying a return of duties levied in excess of the duties prescribed by law, was laid before the Chamber, to the end that, if approving its object and tenor, they might give it their sanction. This was done. The memorial states very ably the ground of the claim, that any such excess, whether paid under protest at the time or not, should be returned; because the exaction of such excess was illegal, *ab initio*, and could never therefore acquire any binding force. The Secretary of the Treasury had taken the ground, that only where protest, specifically setting forth the objection to the legality of the duty, was made at the time of payment, ought such payment to be refunded. This extraordinary position was founded upon a no less extraordinary decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of *C. W. Lawrence vs. Caswell and others*, that the imposition of a higher duty than is authorized by law is not illegal, "in the legal sense of the term," if the party paying it did not enter a protest against the exaction.

A special meeting was held on 11th January, '53, to express the sense of the Chamber on the death of their President, *Elias Hicks*. Appropriate resolutions were passed, and the Chamber resolved to attend the funeral.

Of Elias Hicks we have only the record of a quiet, uneventful life, marked in all its transactions by probity and firmness.

He was the son of Valentine Hicks, of Jericho, L. I., and grandson of the *Elias Hicks*, renowned as a Quaker preacher, and he adhered through life to the Society of Friends.

He was brought up in the counting-house of Samuel Hicks, and commenced business for himself as a ship chandler, in partnership with his father-in-law, Robert Hicks, under the firm of Robert Hicks & Sons. Subsequently, about the year 1847, he formed a partnership with Mr. Frost, under the firm of Frost & Hicks, for the transaction of the shipping business.

He became about this time a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and died as President of the Chamber, having in this, as in every other relation of life, fulfilled, satisfactorily, the duties committed to him, and leaving a name without reproach.

A well reasoned memorial to Congress against a bill proposing a *seignorage* on the coining of gold at the United States Mint, was adopted in February. It presents in a clear and strong light the injustice of imposing upon the miner alone a tax, of which the principle is only justifiable that the tax is designed for the general benefit, by securing a coinage of equal and ascertained value, and therefore should be a general charge. The requirement by the Post-office, that ship-letters for owners and consignees be, like all other letters, sent to the Post-office, was discussed without definite action. The Chamber, at the request of the Committee on Commerce, of Wilmington, N. C., co-operated with them in an appeal to Congress for an appropriation to deepen the entrance of *Cape Fear* river, putting their action in this case upon the ground that the object was one that affected the interests of general commerce, as well as the local interests of Wilmington.

A bill amending or altering the law authorizing the warehousing of foreign goods imported into the United States, was at this time reported by Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, and under the consideration of the Senate. The general provisions were satisfactory

to the Chamber, but certain proposed amendments—one of which was to require that all private warehouses wherein bonded goods were deposited should pay a license of from five hundred to one thousand dollars—and another abolishing drawback on all goods entered for consumption, and upon which duty had been paid—were earnestly resisted. A memorial setting forth the objections to both these provisions, and urging the abolishing of all charges and petty fees connected with storing merchandize in the public warehouses, were adopted by the Chamber, with resolutions founded on it, and all were directed to be laid before Congress.

At the April meeting, in 1853, unanimous resolutions were adopted *in favor* of the enlargement of the Erie Canal, and *against* the proposal to tax railroads, as calculated, by burdening transportation, to turn away from the city and State the productive commerce heretofore enjoyed by them.

At the annual meeting in May, *Peletiah Perit* was chosen President, and Mr. Perit took his seat and the oath at the July meeting.

At a special meeting, held for the purpose in June, an urgent memorial to the Legislature was adopted, praying for a law to restrain further encroachments upon the East River, and that a permanent water-line be fixed by commissioners, to be appointed by the Legislature, at its present session.

An application to the Post Master General was authorized, that he continue the mail service by the Charleston and Savannah steamers, as an indispensable link in our postal communications, and one which, in winter especially, was more reliable than that overland.

The Chamber also remonstrated with the Legislature against any grant of any portion of the present unoccupied river fronts, for any other than commercial purposes. This remonstrance was called forth by the project then in favor, of taking what were known as Jones' Woods, with a large front on the East River, for a public park.

At the August meeting resolutions were adopted warmly commending the choice by the U. S. Government of Lieut. Maury, as their representative to the Convention to be held at Brussels, in order to adopt some uniform plan of making meteorological observations both by sea and land throughout the

world, and recommending Mr. Maury as eminently qualified by learning and experience, to the kindness and consideration of all commercial associations and others interested in the subjects he had so well observed and explained.

At the regular meeting, 4th October, 1853, the President, before proceeding to business, announced the death that morning of *Jas. G. King*, whereupon all ordinary business was suspended, and a committee being appointed to prepare resolutions suitable to the occasion, the Chamber adjourned till the next day. On the next day, accordingly, resolutions of deepest regret and admiration for the deceased were adopted, and the Chamber immediately adjourned.

Among these resolutions were the following:—

Resolved, That the Chamber do declare their sense of the great intelligence and high moral worth of the deceased; of his strictest integrity and honor; of his great public spirit; of his general usefulness; of his liberal Christian charities; and of the high tone and elevation of his manly nature.

Resolved, That the Chamber have no higher example than the character and career of their late associate, to point out to the admiration and imitation of the rising members of the mercantile community.

Of him thus commemorated by his associates, and in the spirit of the second resolution which holds him up as an example to those who are coming forward on the scene he so long adorned, it may be pardoned to the affectionate remembrance of a brother, if he should speak more at length than he has done of others who, like J. G. King, had been honored with the Presidency of the Chamber.

A native of the city of New York, where he was born in May, 1791, he was the third son of Rufus King and Mary Alsop his wife. His early education was in England, where he went with the family on the appointment of his father as Minister Plenipotentiary to that country, in 1796, and after spending a year in Paris, in order to the acquisition of the French language, he came home in 1803, and was soon after placed with the Rev. Dr. Gardener, of Boston, to be prepared for Harvard College, of which his father was an alumnus. He in due season entered the College, completed his four years there, and was graduated with credit in 1810.

His choice of a profession was the law, and his preparatory

studies were pursued under the guidance of Peter Van Schaick, of Kinderhook, an aged and eminent black-letter lawyer, and at the law school of Litchfield, Ct., then under the guidance of Tappan Reeve and Judge Gould.

An early marriage, however, with the daughter of Archibald Gracie, then a leading merchant of this city, turned his views to commerce, and at the close of the war in 1815, he embarked in the commission business; but after a short time, in 1818, removed to Liverpool, (England) and with his brother-in-law, A. Gracie, Jr., established the house of King & Gracie. His career there as a merchant was skilful and successful, though brief, for the commercial disasters which, both in England and America, marked the course of the years 1822–3, overwhelmed his connections at home, and so much impaired his business, that he accepted an offer made to him in 1824, by Mr. Prime, to become a partner on advantageous terms in the flourishing house of Prime, Ward & Sands, of this city. Having wound up the affairs of the house in Liverpool, fulfilling all its engagements, he returned to the United States, after an absence of six years, without addition indeed to his fortune, but with a large and diversified experience, and in possession of the good will and friendship of some of the leading commercial and banking houses of Europe, whose confidence he had gained by the directness of his character and of his mercantile transactions.

Entering upon his new career with his accustomed energy, method, and application, he found himself, before many years, either by the death or withdrawal of the older partners, at the head of the house, whose business he had enlarged, and which was very prosperous. His habits as a merchant were prompt, systematic, and regular. He never permitted himself to be drawn by any prospects of advantage, however alluring, from the prescribed line of his business; and the confidence inspired by this one trait of character, was doubtless as productive in the long run, of profitable results, as might have arisen even from successful deviations from his proper business.

But Mr. K. did not permit business so to engross his time and interest as to be insensible to the claims which society and the republic have upon every citizen. Dispensing always a liberal hospitality, he enjoyed, and himself contributed largely by his varied knowledge and conversational talent to, the plea-

sure of refined society. His charities were numerous, silent and discriminating; and though averse to political life, he nevertheless deemed it a duty obligatory on every one to take such part and interest in public affairs as becomes the citizen of a free representative republic. In the great cause of public improvement, he also took a lively interest, and in 1835, at a period when the N. Y. and Erie Railroad—an enterprize just commenced, and which by its boldness and its certain benefits to the public enlisted both his admiration and his judgment, was struggling against difficulties and discouragement—he consented to accept the Presidency of the company, declining at the same time any compensation or salary; new life was thereby imparted to the enterprize. Mr. K. personally visited and inspected the whole line of the route, and although the disturbed state of the currency soon after, and embarrassments in the business affairs of the country at large, retarded its progress, and Mr. K. himself was before long obliged, by the demands of his house upon his time and labors, to relinquish his connection with the company as its President, the impulse given to it by his aid at a critical moment, may be said to have insured its successful accomplishment, though by other and able hands.

Having, in 1832, removed his residence to Weehawken, in New Jersey, opposite to the city, he took great pleasure in adorning a spot by nature of almost unrivalled beauty, and in gradual outlay and well-directed labor for its embellishment, he found a most congenial relief from the toils of business. Yet, loving and enjoying country life as he did, he was as regular and attentive as ever in the important concerns of his house, of which the chief responsibilities now rested upon him. Every emergency found him ready and steady, never unduly elated by prosperity, never depressed nor desponding, when adverse times discouraged and alarmed others. Hence, therefore, when the year 1837, with its sweeping commercial disasters, shook others from their propriety, Mr. King looked on, not unmoved, certainly, for his sympathies were warm and generous, but without being at all disconcerted, and with the calm self-reliance of one who had measured the whole case, and knew the extent, the applicability, and the adequacy of the resources which could be availed of to meet it. His voice, therefore, his

countenance, his counsel, were cheerful and full of hope, when clouds seemed heaviest, and his hand was stretched forth to sustain. It was a time nevertheless to try men's nerves, as well as credit. Failures of largely extended houses, commencing at New Orleans, spread throughout the land. New York had its full proportion. In London too several houses, chiefly connected with the commerce of the United States, were brought to a stand. The Bank of England set its face against a further extension of credit, and this policy reacted with great intensity in New York. The seasons too had been unpropitious, and for the first time in our history as a nation, even wheat was imported for our own consumption. Nearly one and a half million bushels of wheat were brought from Europe into New York, in the course of the spring of 1837. Every where credit was strained to its utmost, and universal bankruptcy seemed impending. The State of New York, for a loan not exceeding a half million of dollars, at 6 per cent. interest, publicly advertised, received not a single bid.

Mr. King was too sagacious and experienced not to perceive the magnitude of the danger, but he believed and maintained that with proper effort and self-reliance, and zealous mutual cooperation, it could be surmounted without unreasonable sacrifice. Particularly was he anxious and urgent to avert what seemed the too probable loss and disgrace of a suspension of specie payments, in a time of universal peace, and when no scourge of pestilence or famine was at hand to paralyze industry, or extenuate voluntary insolvency. But his efforts were unavailing. A combination of causes, pecuniary and political, overbore all individual opposition, and the banks of New York, after a long and honest struggle in which they were *not* heartily sustained by the moneyed corporations of other cities, and not unanimously, by any means, in their own, were obliged on the 10th of May to notify their suspension of specie payments; and their example led to instantaneous suspension throughout the United States. When the calamity occurred—for such he continued to regard it—Mr. K. directed all his energy to render it as little injurious and of as short duration as possible. He at a public meeting of all interests at the Exchange presented and enforced a series of resolutions, which were adopted with entire unanimity, pledging the community

to sustain the banks and each other in every legitimate effort at resumption, and as the best means of hastening that, to abstain from all annoyance of the banks, and by mutual aid and forbearance to mitigate, as far as possible, existing difficulties. After having done all that depended upon him at home, Mr. K. embarked in the month of October, 1837, for England, with the purpose foremost in his mind of inducing aid, if possible, from that quarter towards the restoration of specie payments in the United States; and he was entirely successful. The Bank of England, which had set its face in a particular manner against certain houses connected with the trade in the United States, made aware by the representations of Mr. King that both the interest of its customers, and the general interests of trade would be secured and promoted by a speedy resumption in the United States—changed its views so completely as to consent to consign to Mr. King's house in New York, *one million sterling* in gold. The high and liberal views which prompted this operation will be apparent on reading the annexed copy of the letter from the Governor of the Bank of England to Mr. King, notifying the arrangements for shipping this gold:—

BANK OF ENGLAND, March 20th, 1838.

SIR—I have to acknowledge your favor of yesterday's date, and to express my concurrence in its contents, in respect to the consignment of gold coin and bullion, and the returns for the same. Mess. Baring, Brothers & Co., have also addressed me, guaranteeing the transaction and the payment of the bills of exchange which may be remitted.

In reply to your observations as to the latitude it may be expedient to give in the time for making these returns, I beg to say that it is not at all the intention of the bank that undue haste shall be exhibited in taking bills of exchange for remittance. I am quite aware that any such action on the exchange of New York would tend unnecessarily to raise premiums on bills. The object of the bank in the operation is not one of profit—the whole transaction is one out of the ordinary course of its operations. Profit, therefore, is not what the bank seeks, but by a judicious course of operation it may be secure from loss; and it is fairly entitled to a moderate rate of interest, if the progress of the transaction will admit of it.

I deem it inexpedient to fix any precise period within which such returns are to be made. Having shown your house so much confidence in entrusting the management of this great concern in their hands, it would but ill agree with that confidence, if I were to prescribe limits which might in many ways act most inconveniently, and deprive the bank of the advantage of your judgment and experience, in both of which I hope to find

a satisfactory result to this important undertaking. Wishing you a safe voyage, I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

T. A. CURTIS, *Governor.*

JAMES GORE KING, Esq.,

Partner of the House of Mess. Prime, Ward & King, of New York, now in London.

The shipments of gold commenced the next day and were rapidly continued. Mr. King himself speedily returned, and all the good effects he had anticipated from the operation, so honorable to him in every view, were promptly and abundantly realized. As the coin arrived, it was disposed of on easy terms to the banks here, in Boston and Philadelphia, and thus the city of New York, which had been the first in the reluctant decision to suspend, had the honor and great satisfaction to lead the way itself in resumption, and to smooth the way for others, and the whole transaction was wound up between the New York house and the Bank of England, with a prompt and satisfactory result.

Mr. King had been long a member of the Chamber of Commerce, his connection with which began with his earliest mercantile career, dating back to 1817. He attached importance to this connection, and looked upon the Chamber as a body through which the voice of the commerce of this great country should be expressed authoritatively on all questions concerning its welfare. He was a regular attendant at its meetings, and took an active part in its deliberations. In 1841 he was chosen 1st Vice President, and by annual re-election continued so until 1845, when he was chosen President, and served as such the allotted term of four years. Over and above the ordinary duties of that office, the President of the Chamber is, by the will of Capt. Randall the liberal sailor-founder of the Sailors' Snug Harbor, *ex officio* a Trustee of that noble charity. Mr. King entered very thoroughly upon this duty, and was instant on all proper occasions, and in all proper ways, both to render this charity as beneficent as possible to those for whom it was founded, and to confine it to them. Hence he always sought, so far as depended upon his vote and influence, to place all its subordinate trusts and offices in the hands of sea-faring men, and to abolish all expenditures not needed for the accommodation and benefit of sailors, and especially all sinecures.

On retiring from the Chair of the Chamber in 1848, in the course of an address of thanks to the assembled members, for the partiality and kindness with which his official career had been sustained, he dwelt with particular emphasis upon the important *ex officio* connection of the President with the foundation of the Sailors' Snug Harbor, and expressed fervently the hope, both in the interest of the sailor, who had so good a right to look up to the merchant as his natural guardian, and in behalf of the dignity and efficiency of the Chamber, that this part of the President's duty might always be scrupulously and diligently executed.

It has been already said that, although without any taste for political life, Mr. King acknowledged the obligation of every citizen in a representative republic to take part, when properly called upon, in the discharge of its public trusts. Hence, when in the agitated state of politics in 1848, Mr. King was urged by friends in New Jersey, of which he was now a resident, and by friends in New York, to suffer himself to be named for a seat in Congress, he acquiesced, and having done so, he at once betook himself personally to the canvass, and to the end that his person and opinions, as well as his manner of stating them, might be widely known by those whose votes he solicited, he visited the chief places of the district, addressing large meetings, and making no disguise of any opinion, and assuming none for the occasion, he was elected by one of the largest majorities ever cast in the district. He took his seat in the House of Representatives, at Washington, as a member of the XXXI. Congress, on Monday, 2d December, 1849, and was present, without flinching, at every ballot for Speaker, 63 in all, and protracted through nearly three weeks, when at last Howell Cobb was chosen, and the power of the House was thus thrown into the hands of those opposed to the President about to be inaugurated, Gen. *Taylor*. Mr. King's congressional career was distinguished for his close and assiduous attention to the business of the House. The first session lasted nearly ten months, and during that whole time Mr. King was never absent a single day, unless kept from his seat by actual illness. It was part of his conviction of duty that no man was at liberty to accept a trust, and yet make the fulfilment of its demands dependent upon his own convenience or personal interest. Whatever

he undertook as trustee, for either private or public ends, he most conscientiously and diligently carried out with all his ability. As a debater, Mr. King's manner was calm, collected and dignified, with a mind well stored, and ready and graceful elocution, and a well modulated voice, he never spoke without commanding attention, for he only spoke on questions which he well understood, and always finished when he had said what was needful for the elucidation of his topic, avoiding alike prosy essays and passionate appeals. His style of speaking was indeed the type of his mind, of which a rare soundness of judgment, and steady adherence to views never hastily nor inconsiderately adopted, were the marking characteristics. On all questions of commerce, of finance, of the public revenue and the mode of its collection, his practical information enabled him to throw much needed light, and to render useful service in their settlement. His political views were definite and decided, yet never intolerant. He was not easily disturbed amid the angry discussions of party, nor at all to be diverted from the path he had marked out for himself, by big talk or little expedients. A seat in Congress was not for him a pastime, nor a stepping stone, but an earnest call by strenuous and disinterested labors for his country, to approve himself faithful to, and worthy of the constituents who had placed him where he was; but, though avoiding none of the duties of his station, he early felt that it was *not* the life for him, and determined accordingly that he would not again permit his name to be used for public office.

Accordingly, at the expiration of the XXXI. Congress, in March, 1851, he returned with delight increased by the contrast with the life at Washington, to his trees, his garden and his beautiful rural home, putting off his official robes with far more alacrity than he had put them on.

Withdrawing more and more from the cares and the requirements of business, he gave himself serenely and cheerfully to that preparation for another life, the need of which advancing years bring to every sensitive and thoughtful mind, and which to his mind was brought all the more impressively, by reason of occasional disturbance of the regular action of the heart and lungs. These symptoms he accepted without murmur as a kindly and merciful warning. "There is something wrong here," he would say, laying his hand on his broad chest, "I will fight

it while I can, but it is to prevail," and beautifully did he carry out this manly sentiment.

Of a well set and vigorous frame, untouched by excess of any sort, with health uninterrupted 'till towards the close of life—a sound mind in a sound body—he took his part in the world hopefully, cheerfully, with head and heart elate. He was a thorough MAN. Diligent and punctual in business, he yet did not permit it to shut out reasonable recreation and the society of his household. In the family circle and in his inner life, he was the radiant centre of as much true happiness, and warm and reciprocal affection as the world has witnessed. His manner, his voice, his eye, his smile revealed the deep springs within his heart of love and joy, and of inventive, considerate and unselfish kindness. With an exterior somewhat grave, he united the warmest and tenderest feelings, the quickest and truest sensibilities, and the most unselfish and unchangeable attachments.

He loved his horse, his dog and his gun, and was a proficient in the use of all of them—the country had great charms for him. To the cultivation of fruits and flowers, and to planting trees, he devoted much time latterly, and the groves of Highwood (his residence on the Weehawken heights, opposite the city) will recall for generations the tasteful and skillful hand which planted, arranged and grouped them. These cannot follow him, but they will bear witness to him long after all those who now enjoy their grateful shade, shall have followed him to that resting place where the funereal cypress weeps alone.

Of simple and childlike faith, of unaffected and unpretending piety, with the consciousness of a life well spent, and of every duty fulfilled so far as may be predicated of any mere mortal, with no rancor in his heart against any human being, surrounded by all temporal blessings, in the midst of a devoted family, all centering their affections on him, and each emulating his good example, with everything to gild the close of life, he seemed as the shadows were lengthening to have withdrawn himself measurably from the busy haunts, chiefly that in his lovely and beloved home he might busy himself in devising how to do good to others, and thus add still brighter and more beautiful tints to the calm yet glowing sunset which his prophetic heart seemed to feel was near at hand.

And soon came death—fearfully sudden indeed—yet not unanticipated. Previous severe spasmodic paroxysms of the heart and lungs, without warning, and so far as could be understood without any predisposing cause, had made him aware of the peculiar uncertainty of his life. He had looked at the case with the calm and sound judgment which was his characteristic, and having come to the conclusion that at any moment one of these paroxysms, somewhat more prolonged than usual, would terminate his existence, he prepared himself for such an issue; he set his house in order, and though manifesting no anxiety, omitting no duty, failing not in the cheerfulness of his social intercourse, and to the common eye evincing by no sign that he felt himself to be at every instant on the brink of the grave, it is believed that he had not for a long while even laid his head on the pillow at night, without the thought that he might not see another morning, nor without saying, as with almost his latest breath he repeated, "Thy will be done."

And this prevision as to the manner of his death was realized. On Monday, 3d October, he had been well as usual and retired to bed at his accustomed hour. He was soon and suddenly seized by one of these paroxysms. The remedies, always at hand, before applied with success, were now resorted to in vain; and before the physician could reach the house, or the family even be assembled, with perfect consciousness and perfect resignation, without a struggle, and almost without a sigh, he breathed out his life, in less than half an hour from the first attack.

Such was the peaceful close of a beautiful life.

The *Danish Sound Dues* form the subject of an elaborate and detailed report at the December meeting. The history of this exaction upon general commerce is told, as far as it was discoverable, and its operation upon our own commerce, is illustrated by quoting the Tariff of Dues, as follows:—

Raw Cotton, per 100 lbs., about				20 cents.
Rice....	"	"	"	11 "
Tobacco,	"	"	"	17½ "

Consequently, says the memorial adopted by the Chamber and transmitted to Congress, "a cargo of 2000 bales cotton

pays a tax to Denmark of about $1720; a cargo of 800 hhds. tobacco pays about $1400, and 1000 tierces of rice about $700."

The day designated by the Charter for the stated monthly meetings of the Chamber, *Tuesday*, being found inconvenient, by reason of the present arrangement of the foreign mails by steamers taking their departure on Wednesday, a memorial to the Legislature for a change of the day, leaving it optional with the Chamber to fix it, was forwarded, and its prayer was forthwith complied with. A report looking to the need of greater zeal in the mercantile community in behalf of the Chamber, its character and just influence, was made by Mr. Caleb Barstow, in Jan. 1853, from a committee having that subject in charge, and the recommendations of that report were unanimously adopted, 1st, for obtaining, as soon as may be, proper and permanent accommodations for the Chamber, and 2nd, increasing the annual dues of members from one dollar to three dollars.

Another petition against the *usury* laws was forwarded to the Legislature. It asserts, 1st, That our usury law is more stringent than any other known. 2nd, That its effect is to disturb and agitate the price for money at any moment of pressure. 3d, That historic facts prove that, other things being equal, interest has been lowest where usury laws were most lenient. 4th, That the impression that the request for a modification of the usury laws comes from lenders, is erroneous, much the greater proportion of those asking a relaxation borrowing more money than they lend. 5th, That usury laws should be confined to fixing a rate in the absence of any contract, leaving borrowers and lenders to contract upon their own terms; but, lastly, despairing apparently of overcoming "hereditary or other feelings" in regard to usury, the petitioners limit themselves now to asking a change in the remedy, and that instead of "fine and imprisonment and loss of the sum loaned," as now, the penalty be restricted to "a loss of the interest only."

A memorial to Congress was adopted praying that the Assay Officer in this city be authorized to *coin* as well as assay gold, &c. The inconvenience and practical injustice of that provision of the revenue laws which subjects a vessel to seisure and forfeiture, if dutiable goods be surreptitiously landed from it with a view to evade the duty, and that, although it be proved that neither owner nor officer of the ship were

privy to such evasion of the law, called forth a well-reasoned memorial from the Chamber, asking a change in this respect. The memorial well says, "Since the enactment of the law referred to, the modes of commerce have greatly changed. Then the owners of the ships were for the most part perhaps the owners of the cargoes also, and disposed of them under the management of an agent on board. Consequently the knowledge of intended wrong against the revenue laws was much within their reach. At any rate they were properly liable for acts of their authorized agent. Now the ship-owner is almost wholly a "common carrier," and cannot by possibility actually know the contents of the packages which his ship transports. With what justice, then, can he be rendered responsible for the unlawful deeds of the shippers? He cannot detect them, he cannot protect himself against them, he derives no profit from them. Why then should he bear the punishment? To inflict penalties upon him under such circumstances, seems to your memorialists to be in plain violation of every principle of equity. We fully believe that the ship-owners of the United States and the officers of their ships, as a general rule, act honestly and faithfully towards the Customs of their country. If there are exceptions, for them we ask no shield. But we do ask that the innocent may not suffer with the guilty. In the vastly extended commerce of the United States with other nations, and the ample facilities required and afforded for its prosecution, very possibly there may be individuals (especially among those who deal in goods of small bulk, but of great value,) constantly crossing the ocean in pursuit of trade, who occasionally conceal about their person, or in their baggage, valuable articles to considerable amounts, with intent to defraud the revenue. But this concealment is sought to be made as effectual against the owners or officers of the ship, as against the Government. If suspicion arise, the Government can examine into the matter with impunity. Not so with the ship-owner or officer. Should he undertake under the influence of a strong suspicion to molest the person or baggage of a passenger, he would be liable for trespass, and to exemplary damages, if proved to have used violence on the person or property of the innocent. He therefore can only protect himself at his peril, a peril that

a prudent man will be extremely unwilling to encounter. He is placed between two fires. If he make an examination he may be mulcted in damages; if he do not, he may be obliged to pay heavy penalties. Your memorialists beg respectfully but emphatically to put the simple question—is this right?"

A very interesting, and, nationally considered, most important subject, occupied the deliberations of the Chamber at their meeting in March, 1854. It had become manifest from the concurring testimony of ship-masters and the records of marine courts, that the character for efficiency, subordination and discipline of the seamen of the merchants' service, had very much fallen off, and this deterioration was accounted for in a great degree by the fact of the small proportion of Americans in that service. Some means therefore were to be devised whereby more American youths might be attracted to the sea. The conclusion at which the Chamber arrived, after much discussion and deliberation, was embodied in a memorial to Congress, which, after setting forth clearly and forcibly the deterioration in the character of sailors, and the need of some measure or policy which should restore the standard of seamanship and the character and qualification of sailors in our mercantile marine to its former elevation, recommended to Congress the establishment in some of the principal seaports of the United States, of *Naval Schools*, for the reception of boys and their preparation for sea service. The details of establishing such schools and the probable cost thereof are given—a plain English education and thorough training in practical seamanship, alone to be aimed at, and the schools to be in hulks anchored in the ports selected.

It is estimated that *six schools* of this sort, capable of receiving and instructing 200 boys each, might be kept up at an annual cost of $240,000. The original cost and fitting up of six hulks is estimated at $150,000.

The system of forced *apprenticeship*, which had been tried in the navy and abandoned, is entirely condemned for the merchant service by this memorial, as repugnant both to those who are shipped, and to the masters of vessels. "Desertion, in the hope, or for the sake, of wages, especially in foreign ports where it could not be prevented; or if that were checked, insubordi-

nation, which, under present laws it is impossible to punish promptly and effectually, would be of constant occurrence, and would, with other evils, outweigh all the fancied benefits of such a system."

It is to be lamented that while the evil is on the increase, and the proportion of American born seamen, on board American vessels, is constantly decreasing, the Government of the United States, whose naval service can alone be made efficient and glorious as heretofore, by a large infusion of American seamen, takes no steps and accepts no hint, towards remedying so great an evil.

In such a state of things what hinders but that the ship-owners and shipping-merchants of New York should, for their own port at least, establish a school of this sort? Why should not the Chamber of Commerce take the lead in suggesting, and preparing, through a competent committee, all the details of such a plan, to be carried out under its special supervision, and the school to be subject to visitation by a regularly organized committee of the Chamber? The expenses as measured against the benefits would be inconsiderable. According to the estimate above quoted, $25,000 would furnish the hulk all ready for service, and $40,000 per annum would provide for the keeping and instruction of 200 boys. The city treasury might well contribute something towards this expenditure, for undoubtedly if the plan were successful, it would attract many lads who, otherwise neglected by, or deprived of, parents, might grow up nuisances and burdens to the city. The Navy Department might well be authorized, if only in the way of trying the experiment upon a small scale before adopting it for the service of the United States on a larger scale, to contribute to such a school; and from these sources, and a small annual payment by the multitudinous class connected with navigation in this great seaport—the expenses of such a naval school might be defrayed without an appreciable tax upon any class of the contributors. And who shall say, that if successful, such a school might not become a model for PAY naval schools, where higher instruction, especially in mathematics, in the arts of design, and in the modern languages might be aimed at, without sacrificing any portion of practical seamanship? Under the acknowledged dearth of an adequate supply of American born

seamen, and with our commerce annually expanding, is it too much to hope from the public spirit of our ship-owners and merchants, that some such plan as this may ere long be tried?

In view of the additional articles, made part of the Treaty of Paris, whereby peace was so lately re-established between the allied powers of Western Europe and Russia, which stipulate as part of the law of nations hereafter, when these articles shall be accepted by other nations, the principle so important to neutrals, that free ships make free goods, and that other principle, so much in keeping with the advancing civilization and Christianity of the world, that warfare on private property on the sea, or privateering, is demoralizing and unjust, as well as unwise—in view of the fact that such was the decision on these points of the ministers of England, France, Sardinia and Russia, and that the concurrence of this Republic equally with other peoples, is invited in this new and most important chapter of international law, it is interesting and unexpected to find that the Chamber of Commerce of New York was beforehand with the negotiators at Paris, and that in April, '54, it adopted a memorial to Congress, of which the substance and the prayer are embodied in the following resolutions:—

1. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of the Chamber, the system of carrying on maritime warfare by means of privateers, is contrary to the dictates of sound morality, inconsistent in its spirit with the principles of Humanity and Justice, and that the time has arrived when it should not be tolerated by the laws of civilized nations.

2. *Resolved*, That the depredations of privateers on private property occasion much individual distress and ruin on the one hand, without any adequate national benefit on the other; that modern warfare can be carried on efficiently without resorting to such means of individual suffering and private plunder, which fall almost entirely on the commercial classes.

3. *Resolved*, That the efforts now making in Europe to extinguish privateering, by arrangements to be consummated among the diplomatists of the old world, call for the co-operation of the Government of the United States.

4. *Resolved*, That the treaty made by the United States with Prussia, in 1785, negotiated by the far-seeing and keen-sighted *Franklin*, whereby both governments bound themselves not to issue commissions, discloses the policy of that early day, and is well worthy of our support at this time.

5. *Resolved*, That this Chamber notices with great gratification, the movement of Mr. Gibson in the House of Commons, on the 7th March, praying [the Queen] for "special instructions to the officers commanding

H. M.'s cruizers, in the event of war, to abstain from interfering with neutral vessels, on account of any goods or property not contraband of war, contained therein; and to direct her ministers to consider the policy of entering into treaty stipulations with foreign countries, on the principle that free ships should make free goods, and the neutral flag give neutrality to the cargo;" and that the Chamber believes that these principles should be sustained by the Government of the United States, in all its negotiations with foreign powers.

6. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Chamber, in view of the magnitude of the tonnage of this country, and its rapid increase, it is incumbent upon the Government of the United States to exert a leading influence in this reform, whether they regard the demands of Justice and Humanity, or the interests of our citizens so much exposed on every ocean.

7. *Resolved*, That a memorial be prepared and signed by the officers of the Chamber, addressed to the President of the United States, asking him to open negotiations with other powers for the suppression of privateering, and for the recognition of the principle that free ships make free goods.

8. *Resolved*, That another memorial be prepared by them, and addressed to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, asking them to pass such laws as will in their opinion check and eventually put a stop to privateering.

It is honorable alike to the sagacity of the Chamber and to the moral principle of its members, thus to have given their emphatic testimony against the practice of privateering—a practice entrenched by such long usage, and as specially adapted to the maritime resources, habits and enterprise of our people, so popular, so destructive to an enemy having an extensive commercial marine, and so lucrative, but at the same time so open to abuse and so fraught with certain demoralization to all concerned in, or sanctioning it—a practice which, in the light of our actual civilization and Christianity, cannot bear examination, and the overthrow of which, moreover, even upon the lower ground of enlightened self-interest, it would most decidedly be for our advantage to labor for, and secure; for no benefits that we could possibly derive from it, would compensate for the disasters which, in a conflict with any maritime people, would result from it to our own widely extended commerce.

In holding this language, however, we desire to be understood, as possibly the Chamber of Commerce intended to be understood, that in thus protesting against warfare upon private property, they aimed at such warfare, whether carried on by national ships or privateers—for otherwise, in our own case in particular—if unhappily engaged in war with a nation

having a powerful and numerous navy, our commerce would be the prey of its national ships, while we should be restrained from making up for the want of a large navy by the numerous and efficient privateers, to which the genius and maritime pursuits of our people so well fits them. And the whole force and argument of the second resolution apply to every sort of warfare on private property, and by substituting the word "cruisers" for "privateers," the whole ground would be covered, and why should it not be so? In warfare on land the theory is, and for the most part the practice conforms to it, that private property is to be respected, and except in the case of a town taken by storm, where brutal violence alone has sway, the severest penalties are inflicted by the conqueror for any depredations committed by his own troops.

Let us try to illustrate the civilization of our age and country by striving for this great reform in maritime warfare—which, with the kindred principle, that free ships make free goods, would tend so much to harmony among nations, and to strip war, if it must come, of those characteristics which leave the most lasting feelings of resentment.

The memorial to Congress founded on these resolutions was published in our commercial papers in May, 1853, without calling forth any very decided comments.

At the October meeting the subject of the *usury laws* and their unequal and injurious operation was largely discussed, and finally an elaborate and powerful memorial to the Legislature was adopted, asking the repeal of these laws. In this memorial it is stated that "more than two-thirds of the states of the Union have made honorable progress towards the consummation at which your committee are aiming. Some twenty-two of the states have usury laws now so lenient, as merely to forfeit the interest upon usurious transactions, and this relaxation has in all cases been found satisfactory. It certainly would redound to the honor of this great State, to take forthwith one step ahead of all competitors, and stand on the proud eminence of entire freedom in so important an element in our social compact as is "the medium of exchange."

A warm and earnest memorial to Congress, was adopted at the December meeting, urging Congress to authorize the fitting

out and despatching of an expedition to search for Dr. Kane and his adventurous companions.

Rogers' system of *Signal Flags* was by vote of the Chamber recommended as being national, to the mercantile marine of the United States.

In January, '55, resolutions complimentary to Commodore Perry, just returned to the United States, for his successful negotiation with Japan, were unanimously passed, and a committee of 25 of the leading members of the Chamber was designated to "take such measures as may be deemed proper to show their appreciation of Commodore Perry's services in negotiating this treaty." At a subsequent meeting it was announced to the Chamber that a sum of $6000 had been raised, and a large service of plate been purchased therewith. The removal of the Quarantine establishment from Staten Island was again agitated—a bill had been passed some years before by the Legislature, authorizing the removal of the Quarantine from the island, and its establishment at Sandy Hook, but this project failed to obtain the assent of the State of New Jersey, as the proprietor of the soil of Sandy Hook, which had been ceded to the use of the United States for certain specific purposes, in which the establishment of a Quarantine was not included. The present scheme was to establish a *floating hospital* for yellow fever patients off Coney Island, all other persons liable to detention at Quarantine to be transferred to Ward's Island. This preposterous project, was summarily disposed of by a brief but telling report by G. W. Blunt, from a committee of the Chamber, which was accepted, and ordered to be forwarded to Albany.

The Chamber also strongly remonstrated against a projected removal of the city offices and courts of law, to a distance (Madison Square) of some three miles from the Custom-house, Post-office, Assay office, banking and insurance companies, and the Merchants' Exchange, as fraught with the greatest inconvenience.

At a special meeting on 9th April, '55, summoned for the purpose, resolutions of respect for the memory, and regret for the loss of the late Walter R. Jones, a member of the Chamber, were adopted.

On the 27th November, at a special meeting, the Chamber received and unanimously adopted a report and resolutions respecting the seizure of the bark *Maury*, in this port, at the instigation of the British consul, Mr. Barclay, and the British Minister, Mr. Crampton. About this vessel, its destination, and its eminently respectable owners, there never was a shadow of doubt, and the Chamber speaks emphatically when it says, in reference to the course of these British officials, "that the feelings of a respectable firm, and the character of New York merchants, have been needlessly disparaged and assailed, through the heedlessness and culpable want of inquiry or strange credulity on the part of those making the representations to the American Government," which led to the seizure.

The whole report, with the resolutions appended to it, alike in its statements, tone and spirit, is honorable to the character and sense of self-respect of New York merchants, and being published, by order of the Chamber, both in the newspapers and in pamphlet form, it had a wide circulation.

On 29th January, '56, a special meeting was held to express the regret of the Chamber at the death of their 1st Vice Presiden, *Geo. Curtis*. Resolutions of regret and warm respect were adopted.

At the February meeting, a report on the reciprocity trade with Canada, was unanimously adopted, and ordered to be forwarded to Congress, asking the extension of this reciprocity, so as to do away with "all duties and restrictions on the importation into the United States of all articles, the growth, produce or manufacture of the Canadas; also to permit all ships and vessels built in Canada to participate on equal terms in the shipping or coasting trade on the interior lakes and fresh waters intervening between the two countries, and for that purpose to open to the free and common use of both, all the water communications, coasts and ports on the said intervening waters between Canada and the United States, to take effect whenever the Government of Canada shall pass a law to extend the like privileges to citizens of the United States, so that the vessels of both countries may engage in the coasting trade on the intervening waters aforesaid, on equal terms."

This departure from a policy as old as the government, of confining the coasting trade to our own vessels, appears, by the

record, to have been sanctioned by a unanimous vote; but, as about this time, or rather for several months previous, the practice coeval with the Chamber of recording the names of all the members present had been discontinued, it does not appear who or how many members were present at this rather remarkable vote, which proposes so great a change in ancient policy respecting the coasting trade, and limits it to *fresh* waters.

A special meeting was held in March, to protest against a scheme then pushed in the Legislature, of breaking up the commission constituted by previous law, for examining the effect of encroachments upon the harbor of New York, and fixing a limit beyond which no future encroachment should be made. The Chamber bears earnest testimony to the value of the labors already accomplished by that commission, and expresses its strong desire that it may be continued till those labors are completed.

At the same meeting thanks were unanimously voted to Professor Bache, Gen. Totten and the officers under their command, for the services they had already rendered on this commission.

A memorial to Congress was adopted, in concert with the Boston Board of Trade, praying that two war steamers, of light draft, be fitted out and sent to the China Seas, to repress piracy there. In concert with the same Board, an application was made to Congress, that copies of all printed documents be sent to the different chambers of commerce in the country.

Resolutions were adopted at the May meeting, thanking the Hon. Mr. Pelton, of this city, for having introduced a bill into the House of Representatives, authorizing the purchase or construction of a suitable steam revenue cutter, to be stationed in this port, and urging upon Congress the adoption of this bill.

Resolutions, in the accustomed form, on the death of Robert Kelly, a member of the Board, were adopted on 5th May.

And here our task ends. Having, in conformity with the resolution of the Chamber, brought up this notice to the present day, when the Chair of the Chamber is so worthily and satisfactorily occupied by PELATIAH PERIT—a name identified with commercial honor and success—with disinterested and intelligent labors to promote good morals, general education and the spread of the Gospel—it remains only to add the concluding paragraphs of the original Memoir.

My hope and aim in thus reviving the past, and placing be fore the present day some of the memorials of the merchants of our early beginning, our colonial and Revolutionary days—have been that those who now fill places made vacant by them—may from such antecedents derive additional motives for a like exercise of civic virtues, of unflinching patriotism, and of intelligent enterprise.

I have, I confess, another motive, that of contributing, if it may be, to revive interest in, and the energy and importance of, the Chamber of Commerce. We have seen that from its origin up to the commencement of this century, and occasionally to a more recent date, the Chamber was called upon alike by the authorities of the city, of the State, and of the nation, for its advice and opinions on questions supposed to be specially within its cognizance—questions of quarantine, and public health and cleanliness—the laws of trade, of currency, the effect of inspection laws, of high and low duties, of bankrupt laws, &c., and the records from which I have so largely quoted show, that the merchants composing the Chamber could always bring to the consideration of these questions not only much practical knowledge, but the ability to state their views with great perspicuity and force. The memorials and reports embodied in the minutes of the Chamber are many of them models of style and of cogent reasoning. In later years the Chamber has been less attractive to the commercial body; the meetings have been negligently attended, and hastily despatched, and as a consequence the influence of the Chamber has declined.

This should not be, and would not be, if the part that it and its members have played in the brief but illustrious annals of our country, were more familiarly known. If what has been said in this Memoir shall tend in any manner to revive interest in the Chamber of Commerce, I shall derive the highest gratification from being, in some humble degree, associated with such a revival, for I, too, was bred a merchant, and never cease to feel proud of being associated with a profession which is the civilizer, the refiner and the liberator of the world. The genius of commerce is, indeed, well symbolized on the seal of this Corporation, by the god Mercury, with his winged cap and his soul-compelling caduceus. The old Greek Mythology,

full as it is of hidden wisdom and typical of higher things, has, in some of the attributes ascribed to Mercury, well foreshadowed the nature and conquests of commerce; for it, too, as is fabled of the youthful Hermes, robs Neptune of his trident, Venus of her girdle, Mars of his sword, Vulcan of his forges, and even Jupiter of his sceptre. It is commerce which covers with its ships the subject sea, which sweeps over the globe for materials to adorn beauty, which seals in its scabbard the red sword of war, and cultivates peace and the arts of peace; which lights the fires of the mechanic arts, and, last and greatest of all, teaches man no longer to bow down before idols of his own creation on earth or in the skies, but looking erect to heaven, to walk among his fellow-men as an equal, while walking humbly and devoutly before the true and no longer conjectural or unknown God.

It was the distinguishing feature of the merchants who formed this association, and of their immediate successors, that they filled that most interesting portion of our history, when commerce was rising from its cradle and taking the first steps in that grand progress, which is already the marvel of the world—and which is yet advancing.

At such an epoch every movement was important. Events, at other seasons the most trivial, were now momentous, casting forward shadows of dark and solemn import. Nor were the men of that day limited in their reward to that which the eye of faith alone could discern—for many were the instances where the individual pioneers lived to enjoy, in real fruition, the harvest earned by their industry and forecast.

A young German was found among the number, pursuing within the solitude and depths of the primeval forests of New York, the trapping of the beaver upon its remote and then almost inaccessible waters.

That individual lived to be pushed before the advancing wave of civilization, inward and inward, and yet farther inward, through the great range of inland seas, to the utmost extremity of Lake Superior, and thence onward to the Rocky Mountains, and still borne on by the wave, surmounting them, till he was checked only in his progress by the shores of the Pacific.

This humble German boy, thus urged on from ocean to ocean, stands (and his memory will long endure) as a type of American progress. The field of his earlier achievements—the Seneca Lake—then a solitude and a waste, is now gemmed with gardens, and temples of science and religion; and in this city, his final abode, and resting place, and sepulchre, are provided the means, through the munificence of that young trapper, of building, furnishing and maintaining a public library, on a magnificent scale, free to all, and which will bear to all time the name of JOHN JACOB ASTOR.

Such are the results of Commerce, inspired by Freedom, and regulated and protected by Law.

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